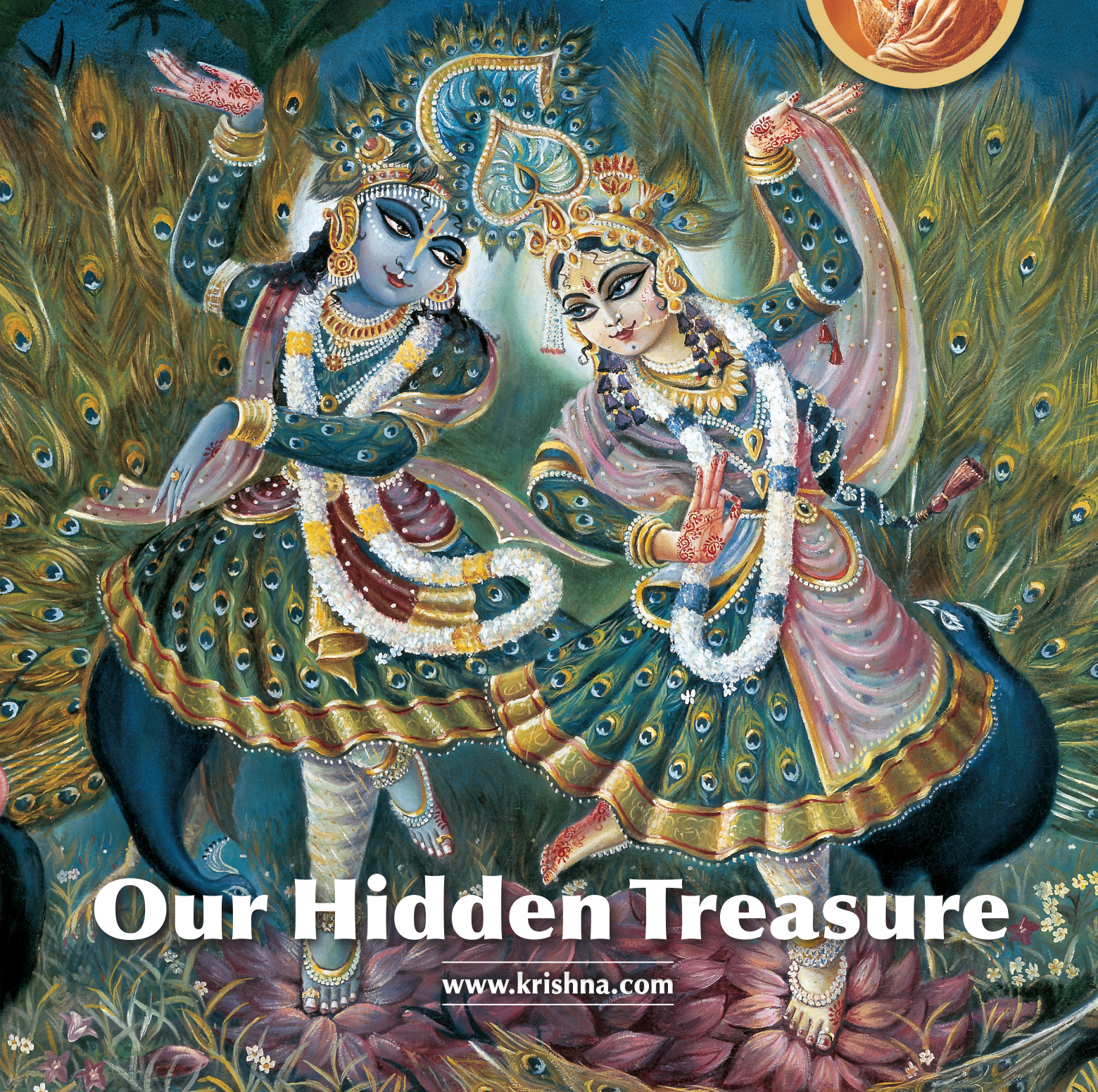


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.

BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement • May/June 2011 • \$4.50



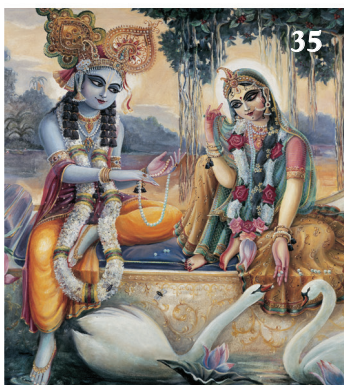
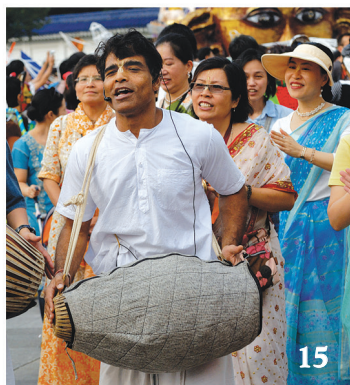
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BACK^{to}GODH

Founded 1944 • Vol. 45, No. 3 • May/June 2011



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COVER Life's real goal and the treasure buried within our hearts is pure love for Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, and Rādhā, His eternal consort. Please see the article "Our Hidden Treasure," beginning on page 35. (Painting by Añjana Dāsa.)

"The impersonalists cannot reconcile how God can be a person and not have to suffer birth and death like them. Because they have had a very bad experience of being a person here, they think the Absolute must be impersonal in order to be perfect. They are muḍhās, fools; they are not intelligent."—p. 32



WELCOME



IN THIS ISSUE, Mohinī Rādhā Devī Dāsī's article "Our Hidden Treasure" describes how Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, using an allegory, revealed that

the ultimate goal of life is *bhakti*, or pure love for God, Kṛṣṇa. Sometimes people wonder: To focus our love on Kṛṣṇa, do we need to withdraw it from everyone else? No, we don't, because one who loves Kṛṣṇa loves everyone else by seeing their relationship with Kṛṣṇa.

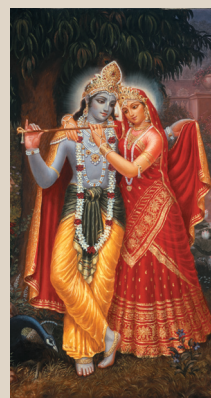
In "Mother Earth: Holder and Giver of Wealth," Viśākhā Devī Dāsī shows that loving Mother Earth is part of loving Kṛṣṇa because she is a display of some of His energies. Kṛṣṇanandinī Devī Dāsī, in "Vaiṣṇava Family Love and Affection," explains how our love for Kṛṣṇa must extend to our family members, who are eternally part of Kṛṣṇa.

In fact, every living being is part of Kṛṣṇa, and we can love everyone by working to reunite all souls with Him. In "Prabhupāda at the Avalon Ballroom," Mukunda Goswami shows how Prabhupāda introduced hundreds of San Francisco hippies to Kṛṣṇa through His holy names. And Meera Khurana's "In Vrindavan with a Hundred Foreigners" tells what it's like to be in a place saturated with love for Kṛṣṇa.

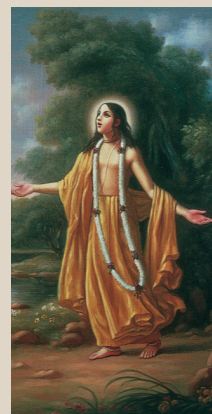
Hare Kṛṣṇa. —Nāgarāja Dāsa, Editor

OUR PURPOSES

- To help all people discern reality from illusion, spirit from matter, the eternal from the temporary.
- To expose the faults of materialism.
- To offer guidance in the Vedic techniques of spiritual life.
- To preserve and spread the Vedic culture.
- To celebrate the chanting of the holy names of God as taught by Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.
- To help every living being remember and serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead.



Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are together the one Supreme Absolute Truth.



Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the combined incarnation of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, inaugurated the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa five hundred years ago.



His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the
Hare Krishna Movement



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Letters

Kirtana Practice

In response to “Tone Deaf Bhakta’s” letter in the March/April issue, I would like to let him know that when I was a young devotee in Hamburg, Germany, in the early days of the movement, I was once requested not to lead Sunday-feast *kīrtanas* by one devotee because I couldn’t sing so nicely. I took exception to this, probably due to my neophyte position, and wrote a letter to Śrīla Prabhupāda about it, and he answered that “practice makes perfect.” (In those days we often wrote Śrīla Prabhupāda things that weren’t so important.) I think my *kīrtana* voice has since improved, but that nice instruction by Śrīla Prabhupāda stands.

Śivānanda Dāsa

Sandy Ridge, North Carolina

Other Yogas

I have noticed BTG recommending against the practice of *aṣṭāṅga-*, *karma-*, and *jñāna-yoga*. Why is this? In the *Gītā*, Kṛṣṇa and Prabhupāda clearly recommend these practices as ways to come to *bhakti-yoga*. These practices bring *sattva* [the mode of goodness], which is said to be the doorway to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Love the magazine.

Wendy Eastbright
Via the Internet

Our reply: Bhakti is independent of the other processes, and it is competent to bring one to *sattva* by itself. This is described in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.17–19):

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead, who is the Paramātmā [Supersoul] in everyone’s heart and the benefactor of the truthful devotee, cleanses desire for material enjoyment from the heart of the devotee who has developed the urge to hear His messages, which are in themselves virtuous when properly

heard and chanted. By regular attendance in classes on the *Bhāgavatam* and by rendering of service to the pure devotee, all that is troublesome to the heart is almost completely destroyed, and loving service unto the Personality of Godhead, who is praised with transcendental songs, is established as an irrevocable fact. As soon as irrevocable loving service is established in the heart, the effects of nature’s modes of passion and ignorance, such as lust, desire and hankering, disappear from the heart. Then the devotee is established in goodness, and he becomes completely happy.

The danger in recommending the other processes is that they are generally not powerful enough to give us perfection in just this one life. In fact, Kṛṣṇa says that by *jñāna*, one takes many, many births to surrender to Him (Bg. 7.19), and there is no guarantee that one will not become distracted from the path, especially in this age of Kali.

Although Kṛṣṇa speaks of other paths in the *Gītā*, ultimately a careful reading will show *bhakti* to be supreme:

One can understand Me as I am, as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, only by devotional service. And when one is in full consciousness of Me by such devotion, he can enter into the kingdom of God. (18.55)

My dear Arjuna, only by undivided devotional service can I be understood as I am, standing before you, and can thus be seen directly. Only in this way can you enter into the mysteries of My understanding. (11.54)

The Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is greater than all, is attainable by unalloyed devotion. Although He is present in His abode, He is all-pervading, and everything is situated within Him. (8.22)

If you glance at the Sanskrit of each verse, you will see that the word *bhakti*, meaning “by *bhakti*,” appears in each, and in the last two the word *ananyayā*, meaning “by undivided,” appears. Thus the meaning is quite clear.

Because we want to give people the opportunity to attain perfection in this very life, we stress the superior process of *bhakti*, as do Kṛṣṇa and Śrīla Prabhupāda in countless places. Only for those averse to *bhakti* may the other yogas be promoted as valuable, because they gradually purify people to the point where they can appreciate the value of *bhakti*, engage in it, and thus attain perfection.

Can't Stop Reading

The BTG magazines lately are all masterpieces. I find myself reading one article that interested me, and when I finish that, the next page always seems to attract me as well.

Before I know it, I've read the whole magazine. Your team is certainly blessed by Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Lakṣmīpriyā Devī Dāśī
Vrindavan, India

Eternal Hell?

I am interested in Hinduism (but officially a Greek Orthodox), and I have been informed that there is no eternal condemnation in your faith, just reincarnation or hellish realms, but these are temporary places. The *Bhagavad-gītā* mentions hell, however, so is there a concept of hell in ISKCON, and if there is, is it eternal?

C. Konstadinos
Via the Internet

Our reply: You are correct that the Vedic scriptures give no mention of eternal condemnation. There is detailed information of hellish planets where one who is

overly sinful suffers, but such reactions are temporary. Those who have spiritual knowledge view material existence itself as miserable or hellish. Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (8.16), “From the highest planet in the material world down to the lowest, all are places of misery wherein repeated birth and death take place. But one who attains to My abode, O son of Kuntī, never takes birth again.”

One is therefore advised to end all material enjoyment and suffering by advancement in pure spiritual consciousness. This is easily done by serious and sincere chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. ☸

Replies were written by Krishna.com Live Help volunteers. Please write to us at: BTG, P. O. Box 430, Alachua, Florida 32616, USA. Email: editors@krishna.com.

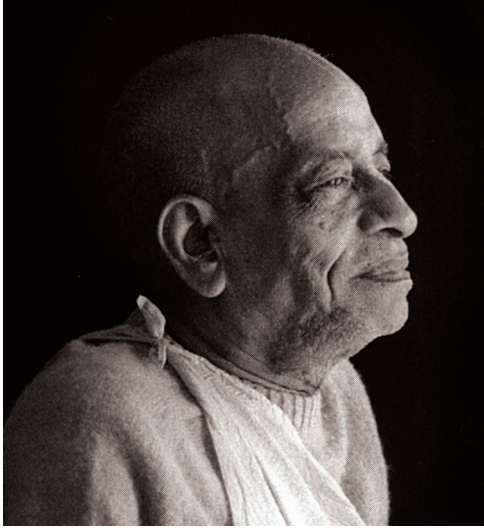


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FOUNDER'S LECTURE

Nairobi, Kenya—November 1, 1975

Everything



Is Not One

In describing His two categories of energy, Lord Kṛṣṇa refutes the ideas of Māyāvāda philosophers and modern scientists.

**by His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami
Prabhupāda**

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society
for Krishna Consciousness

*apareyam itas tv anyāṁ
prakṛtiṁ viddhi me parāṁ
jīva-bhūtāṁ mahā-bāho
yayedam dhāryate jagat*

“Besides these, O mighty-armed Arjuna, there is another, superior energy of Mine, which comprises the living entities who are exploiting the resources of the material, inferior nature.”

—Bhagavad-gītā 7.5

THE GROSS AND SUBTLE material energies have been explained in the previous verse. Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence, and false ego—these are all material energies. The material energy has nothing to do with the spiritual energy, and because it is not spiritual energy, it is called *aparā*, “inferior.”

For example, in our body there are some superior parts and some inferior parts. The brain is a superior part. But there are other parts, where we pass stool and urine. Everything is part of my body, but the position is different, superior and inferior. Similarly, everything is God—*sarvaṁ khalv idaṁ brahma*—but still there must be a distinction between His superior and inferior energies. Although everything is Brahman, God, still for practical purposes there is a

Unlike the material world, the spiritual world is composed solely of spiritual energy. Here, the residents of Vṛndāvana greet Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma as They return home in the evening.



Painting by Yadurani Dasi

distinction between superior and inferior. Those who foolishly do not make this distinction are called *nirviśeṣa-vādis*. They are impersonalists. *Nirviśeṣa* means “without any varieties.” But there are varieties.

The body is one, but different parts of the body are considered superior and inferior. This is called *acintya-bhedābheda* philosophy, “simultaneously one and different.” The anus and the genitals are part of the body, and the brain is also part of the body, but the brain is superior to the anus and genitals.

Bheda means “distinct,” and *abheda* means “one.” We should

prakṛtim viddhi me parām means that there is another energy besides the material energy and that other energy is superior to the material energy. And what is that energy? *Jiva-bhūta*, the living being within the gross and subtle body.

Fire, Heat, and Light

Modern scientists cannot understand the clear distinction between the inferior energy and the superior energy. Both of them are energies, and Kṛṣṇa is their energetic source. Everything comes from Kṛṣṇa, just as heat and light come from fire.

man’s hair will not grow anymore. But a living man, because he has that energy, can shave today and have new hair tomorrow. This is called inconceivable energy. We can talk foolishly with some bombastic words—“These cells and this and that”—but this phenomenon is not within our control.

The Spiritual World

These two energies, the material energy and the spiritual energy—one superior, one inferior—are working within this world as a mixture. And the spiritual world is the place where there is no material energy, simply spiritual energy.

The land in the spiritual world is not like this land. The *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.29) describes the spiritual world. *Cintāmaṇi-prakara-sadmasu*. There are also buildings there, but those buildings are

not like these buildings of brick and stone. *Cintāmaṇi* means “touch-stone,” and *prakara* means “houses.” There are also trees, but those trees are spiritual trees, *kalpa-vṛkṣa*. Here if you go to a mango tree, you get mangoes, but there you can go to any tree and ask for anything and it will be supplied. We cannot imagine how one tree can supply everything. But that is possible because they are spiritual. For example, if I ask a disciple, “Bring a mango,” he’ll go anywhere and bring a mango because he is a living spirit soul. But if I ask this pillow, “Bring a mango,” it will not be possible.

That is the distinction between material and spiritual. And these foolish scientists are trying to prepare spiritual energy by combinations of material energy. Just see their foolishness. They are trying to create the living force by chemical combination. Therefore Kṛṣṇa says they are *mūḍhā*, “rascals.” You cannot manufacture life by combining material chemicals. That is not possible. Here it is said *aparā*: life is a different thing, superior. How is it superior? *Yayedam dhāryate jagat*:

These foolish scientists are trying to prepare spiritual energy by combinations of material energy. Just see their foolishness.

not take only one part of the philosophy: “Everything is one.” No. Everything is one, but there is variety as well. That is explained in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.4):

*mayā tatam idam sarvaṁ
jagad avyakta-mūrtinā
mat-sthāni sarva-bhūtāni
na cāhaṁ teṣv avasthitaḥ*

“By Me, in My unmanifested form, this entire universe is pervaded. All beings are in Me, but I am not in them.” The jail department is part of the government, but the president does not live in the jail. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa, God, is everywhere because His energy is acting everywhere.

The material world is the combination of two energies: the superior energy and the inferior energy. Our body is made of the inferior energy—earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence, and false ego. But what I am, that is superior. That is explained here by the word *jiva-bhūta*, which refers to the living being. Beyond these two gross and subtle energies there is another, superior energy. In today’s verse, *anyām*

And the fire is distinct from the heat and light.

The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (1.22.53) states,

*eka-deśa-sthitasyāgner
jyotsnā vistāriṇī yathā
parasya brahmaṇaḥ śaktis
tathedam akhilaṁ jagat*

“Just as the illumination of a fire, which is situated in one place, is spread all over, the energies of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Parabrahman, are spread all over this universe.” If you study whatever God has created, you become a philosopher. The sun is situated in one place. Every day we can see it, a fiery substance. From the heat and light of the sun, all planets are created and the vegetation and all other products are coming out. Without sunlight you cannot do anything. Heat and light are essential.

Both the material world and the spiritual world are manifestations of the supreme energetic. You and I also have energy. You cut your hair; automatically the hair will grow again. So there must be some energy causing this. A dead

it uses this world. This world is important because of the spiritual energy; otherwise it has no value.

The User of Matter

The spiritual energy, the living soul, knows how to utilize matter. *Yayā idaṁ dhāryate jagat. Jagat*, this world, is made of material energy, but the spiritual energy, the living entity, knows how to utilize this material energy. He knows how to utilize earth by making bricks and making lime to construct a nice house. The controller is the spiritual energy. Therefore the controller is called *parām*, superior energy. The so-called scientists consider the material energy and spiritual energy to be the same. They have no brain to distinguish between them.

We have to understand this point from Kṛṣṇa; therefore Kṛṣṇa's instruction is so important. If you don't take Kṛṣṇa's instruction, then in spite of your so-called higher advancement of education, you simply remain a *mūḍha*, rascal. Those who are not aware of the distinction between the spiritual energy and the material energy are called *mūḍha*. But if you understand the superior energy, the spiritual energy, then it will be possible to understand Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇa is full spiritual energy, *sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha*:

*īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ
sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ
anādir ādir govindaḥ
sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam*

“Kṛṣṇa, who is known as Govinda, is the Supreme Godhead. He has an eternal blissful spiritual body. He is the origin of all. He has no other origin, and He is the prime cause of all causes.” (*Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.1)

The distinction between the material and spiritual energy is the first lesson to enter into spiritual understanding. From the beginning of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, in the second chapter (2.13), Kṛṣṇa teaches that the spiritual energy is within the body.

*dehino 'smin yathā dehe
kaumāraṁ yauvanaṁ jarā
tathā dehāntara-prāptir
dhīras tatra na muhyati*

“As the embodied soul continuously passes, in this body, from boyhood to youth to old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death. A sober person is not bewildered by such a change.”

There are many evidences in the Vedic literature that the spiritual energy is different from the material energy. And if you understand spiritual energy, then you can understand God, because spiritual energy is a sample of God. Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (15.7), *mamai-vānśo . . . jīva-bhūta*. What is the *jīva-bhūta*? The living entities. *Mama eva aṁśa*: “They are minute parts of Me.” A son is part of the father bodily, not spiritually. Spiritually he is part of Kṛṣṇa, and materially he is part of the body of the father. So we are not talking of the material. The *Bhagavad-gītā* is spiritual understanding.

A Sample of God

The *jīva-bhūta* is controlling the material nature. And Kṛṣṇa says, “These *jīva-bhūta*, living entities, are parts of Me.” Therefore, if you try to understand the living entities, who are part of God, then you can understand God. For example, if you are boiling a big volume of rice and you take one grain of rice and press it in your hand, you can understand that the whole pot of rice is ready. Similarly, if you thoroughly understand this spiritual entity—the individual living entity—then you can understand God. Another example: If you take a drop of ocean water and analyze it chemically, then you can understand the chemical composition of all seawater.

If you study human nature, you can also learn something about the nature of God. But His nature is perfect and unlimited, and we have His qualities in a very minute quantity.

In contact with the material

What Is the Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement?

Founded in 1966 by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) carries on a great ancient tradition rooted in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the teachings Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke five millennia ago. The *Gītā* and the other Vedic scriptures declare Kṛṣṇa to be the original person, God Himself, who appears periodically in this world to liberate all living beings.

Only five hundred years ago, Kṛṣṇa descended as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to teach the most sublime and effective means of meditation for the present day: the chanting of the names of God, especially as found in the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra.

Today members of ISKCON continue Lord Caitanya's movement by distributing the teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa and the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra all over the world.

Pronunciation

We spell Sanskrit words and names by a phonetic system that lets you know how to say each word. Pronounce short **a** like the **u** in **but**, long **ā** like the **a** in **far** (and held twice as long as the short **a**). Pronounce **e** like the **a** in **evade**, long **ī** like the **i** in **pique**. Pronounce the vowel **ṛ** like the **ri** in **rim**, and **ṛ** like the **ch** in **chair**. Pronounce consonants like **ch**, **jh**, and **dh** as in **staunch-heart**, **hedgehog**, and **red-hot**. Pronounce **ś** and **ṣ** like **sh**. So for *Kṛṣṇa* say KRISHNA, for *Caitanya* say CHAITANYA.

Spiritual Names

ISKCON members receive names of Lord Kṛṣṇa or his great devotees, combined with Dāsa, for men, or Dāsī, for women, both of which mean “servant.” For instance, the name Kṛṣṇa Dāsa means “servant of Kṛṣṇa.”

energy, your nature is imperfect. But if you become liberated from material bondage, then you become perfect. You can understand, “I am as good as God, but God is great; I am very, very small.” That is self-realization. If you think, “I am fully as good as God,” that is your foolishness. You are as good as God in that you possess qualities like His, but you are not as great as God. To understand this point is self-realization. Therefore *sāstra* (scripture) says, “If the spiritual spark is equal to the supreme whole, then how has he come under His control?” This is the reasoning. We are under the control of someone. In the material atmosphere we are fully controlled. And when we are spiritually free, still we are controlled, because God remains the great and we remain the small.

Unlike in the material world, in the spiritual world the fact that God is great and we are small does not cause us to disagree with Him. Try to understand the distinction between the material world and the spiritual world. The living entity is a very minute particle of God. In the spiritual world everyone is aware of his position. The living entities there know, “I am a small particle of God.” Therefore there is no disagreement. Everything is going on nicely. Here in the material world

we are in disagreement with God because we are falsely thinking, “I am as good as God.” That thinking is the basis of material life. To be free from this wrong conception of life is liberation.

The Small Serves the Great

All the *bhaktas*, devotees, have accepted that “God is great; I am small, a very small particle. Therefore, as the small serves the great, my real duty is to serve God.” This conception is liberation. In fact, to serve someone greater is natural. Everyone is going to the office, to the factory, to work. What are they doing? Going to serve someone greater. Otherwise they might stay at home. Why are they going to the factory, to the office? Because it is natural for the small to serve the great.

God is the greatest. Then what is your business? To serve Him, that’s all. This is your natural position. In the material world someone is going to serve someone else for bread, and still he is thinking, “I am God.” Just see what kind of God he is. This rascal is thinking he is God, but if he is driven away from the office, he’ll not get his bread. Still he is thinking he is God.

This is the nature of the material world. Everyone is thinking, “I am God.” Therefore they have been

called *mūḍhā*, rascals. They do not surrender to God. Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.15),

*na māṁ duṣkṛtino mūḍhāḥ
prapadyante narādhamāḥ
māyayāpahṛta-jñānā
āsurāṁ bhāvam āśritāḥ*

“Those miscreants who are grossly foolish, who are lowest among mankind, whose knowledge is stolen by illusion, and who partake of the atheistic nature of demons do not surrender unto Me.” *Apahṛta-jñānāḥ*: “his real knowledge is taken away.” He does not know that he is small, that God is great, and that his business is to serve God. This knowledge is taken away. This is the sign of a rascal.

We can understand that a person is a rascal by one symptom. Just as by pressing one grain of rice from a whole pot of rice you can understand that the rice is quite all right, by one symptom you can understand who is a rascal. What is that symptom? *Na māṁ . . . prapadyante*. He is not a devotee of Kṛṣṇa? Then he’s a rascal. That’s all. Immediately you take it without any other consideration that anyone who is not a devotee of Kṛṣṇa, who is not prepared to surrender to Kṛṣṇa, is a rascal. This is our conclusion.

Thank you very much. ❀



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Glossary



Ācārya—a spiritual master who teaches by example.

Balarāma—Lord Kṛṣṇa's first expansion, who acts in the role of Lord Kṛṣṇa's elder brother.

Battle of Kurukshetra—an epic battle for rule of the world, fought five thousand years ago.

Bhagavad-gītā—the sacred book in which Lord Kṛṣṇa gives the essence of knowledge to His friend and disciple Arjuna. (Cited as Bg.)

Bhakti—devotional service to the Supreme Lord.

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura—the spiritual master of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda.

Bhakti-yoga—linking with the Supreme Lord through devotional service.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu—the incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa who appeared five hundred years ago to teach the chanting of the names of God as the religion for the present age.

Darśana—"viewing," audience with a deity or saintly person.

Dharma—(1) ordained duties or religious principles; (2) one's eternal, natural occupation (i.e., devotional service to the Lord).

Godhead—the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Reality, progressively realized first as the impersonal all-pervasive oneness, more fully as the Supersoul within the heart of every living being, and ultimately as the all-opulent Supreme Person.

Gurukula—a school where children learn the philosophy and practices of Kṛṣṇa consciousness along with regular academic subjects (literally "the place of the guru").

Hare Kṛṣṇa—the great mantra Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

ISKCON—the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Japa—individual chanting of names of God, usually while counting on beads.

Kali-yuga—in the endlessly repeated cycle of four cosmic ages, the present and worst age, the Age of Quarrel, of which 5,000 of 432,000 years have passed.

Karma—material action; its inevitable reaction; or the law by which such action and reaction are governed.

Kirtana—congregational singing of names of God, usually accompanied by cymbals (*karatālas*) and drums (*mṛdaṅgas*).

Kṛṣṇa—the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His original transcendental form (see "Godhead").

Mahābhārata—the epic history of ancient India, a history in which the *Bhagavad-gītā* appears as the most important and well-known text.

Māyā—illusion; the energy of the Supreme Lord that deludes living entities into forgetting their spiritual

nature and forgetting God.

Māyāvādi—one who regards the Absolute Truth as ultimately impersonal.

Modes of nature—the three qualities (goodness, passion, and ignorance) that hold sway over all action in the material world.

Nityānanda—the incarnation of Lord Balarāma who appeared with Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Prasādam—vegetarian food that has been prepared for the Lord and offered to Him with devotion.

Purāṇas—Vedic histories.

Rādhārāṇī—Lord Kṛṣṇa's consort and pleasure potency.

Rathayātrā—"chariot festival": a festival in which the form of Kṛṣṇa is borne in procession on a large canopy-topped chariot or float, especially the festival originating in Puri, India, for Jagannātha (Lord Kṛṣṇa, "the Lord of the universe").

Sannyāsa—the renounced life of a man who relinquishes home to dedicate himself fully to the Supreme.

Śrī—an honorific meaning "opulent" (similarly: Śrīla, Śrīmad, Śrīmān, Śrīmatī).

Śrīla Prabhupāda—His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam—the most important of the eighteen *Purāṇas*, which tells of the nature and pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His devotees.

Supersoul—the form of the Lord who resides in every heart along with the individual soul.

Upaniṣads—the 108 essential philosophical treatises that appear within the *Vedas*.

Vaiṣṇava—a devotee of the Supreme Lord (from the word *Viṣṇu*).

Varṇāśrama—the Vedic social system. It organizes society into four occupational and four spiritual divisions (*varṇas* and *āśramas*). The members of the four *varṇas* are the *brāhmaṇas* (intellectuals and priests), the *kṣatriyas* (administrators and soldiers), the *vaiśyas* (farmers and businessmen), and the *śūdras* (laborers and artisans). The members of the four *āśramas* are the *brahmacārīs* (celibate students), *gṛhasthas* (married people), *vānaprasthas* (retired people), and *sannyāsīs* (renunciants).

Vedas—the hymns of knowledge revealed by the Lord Himself at the beginning of creation.

Vedic—pertaining to the culture in which the *Vedas* and related scriptures guide all aspects of human life.

Viṣṇu—any form of the Personality of Godhead (see "Godhead"); the forms the Lord manifests to create and sustain the material world.

Vṛndāvana—the transcendental abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa, mirrored on earth as the town in India where Kṛṣṇa appeared five thousand years ago.

JUST TO EMBRACE A TREE

A sole tree in New York City inspires a young Indian medical student to travel to the USA.

By Yugāvatāra Dāsa

WHEN I WAS studying in medical school, like many Indians I developed the desire to visit the USA, just to see another feature of the same world. ISKCON devotees used to visit the young men's hostel where I was residing at the time. One day they showed us a booklet containing information about various ISKCON temples in the USA. The booklet mentioned two sites in New York City that fascinated me: Prabhupāda's first temple, in the old Matchless Gifts shop at 26 Second Avenue, and nearby Tompkins Square Park, where Śrīla Prabhupāda sat beneath a tree and performed the chanting of the holy name with hippies dancing around him. I heard that this tree is still there and is named the Hare Krishna Tree [please see the sidebar on page 14]. I decided I had to see these places where Śrīla Prabhu-



padā started the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

As I prepared for my maiden US trip, I started realizing the spiritual greatness of Śrīla Prabhupāda. The very thought of going to a foreign land was causing me so much anxiety, in spite of the fact that I had enough money with me and relatives in the US to take care of me. Śrīla Prabhupāda had nei-

ther money nor contacts. But due to his faith in his guru and Kṛṣṇa, he was not anxious. He had no one in India to see him off, but he had faith that Kṛṣṇa was with him. I had a gang of relatives to drop me at the airport, but still I was feeling lonely due to forgetfulness of the Supersoul.

Before the trip I called my cousin Gitajali in New Jersey, where she is a part of ISKCON's congregation. When I told her

pāda started the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Preparing for The Trip

As I prepared for my maiden US trip, I started realizing the spiritual greatness of Śrīla Prabhupāda. The very thought of going to a foreign land was causing me so much anxiety, in spite of the fact that I had enough money with me and relatives in the US to take care of me. Śrīla Prabhupāda had nei-

Above: The author hugs the special tree in Tompkins Square Park. At right: In 1966, Śrīla Prabhupāda stands under the same tree to speak about chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.





I wanted to visit New York, she thought I was eager to see the Statue of Liberty and the Empire State Building. But I was more interested in Tompkins Square Park than Times Square. She said she had heard about the park in ISKCON books but had never been there. She surfed the net and got in touch with the New York devotees for the exact location.

At the Park

After I reached New York, Gitanjali and I first took *darśana* of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda at ISKCON's temple in Brooklyn and then proceeded to Manhattan. The ISKCON center at 26 Second Avenue was closed when we arrived, so we peeped through the window to

get a glimpse of the early days of ISKCON. This was the first Hare Kṛṣṇa temple, and discourses are still held there.

From there we proceeded to Tompkins Square Park and asked a man for the location of the tree. When pointing out the tree, he said that many Hare Kṛṣṇas come and worship it.

The tree belongs to a rare species, and so the government has preserved it. In memory of the Hare Kṛṣṇa explosion that took place under it, the tree is identified as the Hare Krishna Tree.

Embracing the Tree

As soon as I saw the tree I offered obeisance from a distance and then ran to embrace it—probably with

the same intensity with which devotees embrace the *neem* tree at Yoga Pīṭha (Lord Caitanya's birthplace) or the Siddha Bakula tree at Jagannath Puri under which Nāmācārya Hari-dāsa Ṭhākura chanted. Yes, that tree in Tompkins Square Park is equally important. As Lord Caitanya was born under the *neem* tree, ISKCON was born under this Hare Krishna Tree. As Haridāsa Ṭhākura chanted beneath the Siddha Bakula tree, Śrīla Prabhupāda chanted the holy name under this tree.

As I embraced the tree, oblivious of the people in the park, I intensely prayed, "O Hare Krishna Tree, you have witnessed the miracle of transformation of hippies into happies. You have seen Śrīla Prabhupāda chanting the holy name, which most of us have not seen. O tree, if Śrīla Prabhupāda is again going to come and chant here in a future Kali-yuga, I don't mind being born as a hippie so that I will get the golden opportunity to witness the Hare Kṛṣṇa explosion."

Some people in the park failed to comprehend why my sister and I were embracing the tree again and again. The park is a holy site for us. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* states that the pure devotee is a personified holy place. Wherever he goes turns into a holy place. So these are our modern holy places—the temples built by Śrīla Prabhupāda and all the places where he lived and preached.

As I was about to board my flight back to India, I called my sister to thank her. I told her that although I never saw or heard Śrīla Prabhupāda in person, I have seen and heard his disciples. Now I can proudly proclaim that I have even seen the tree that saw and heard Śrīla Prabhupāda. ❀

Yugāvatāra Dāsa (Yuvaraj Jayprakash Bhosale) is an associate professor of anatomy at Seth G. S. Medical College and KEM hospital in Mumbai. He is a disciple of His Holiness Rādhānātha Swami and serves as a mentor at ISKCON Chowpatty. His email address is dryuvaraj@gmail.com.

This text appears on a plaque under the tree where Prabhupāda held the first public kīrtanas in the West.

Hare Krishna Tree

ONE OF TOMPKINS Square Park's most prominent features is its collection of venerable American elm (*Ulmus americana*) trees. One elm in particular, located next to the semi-circular arrangement of benches in the park's center, is important to adherents of the Hare Krishna religion. After coming to the United States in September, 1965, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (1896–1977), the Indian spiritual leader, founded the International Society for Krishna Consciousness in New York. He worked from a storefront on nearby Second Avenue that he used as the Society's American headquarters. Prabhupada and his disciples gathered in Tompkins Square Park in the fall of 1966 to introduce the East Village to the group's distinctive 16-word mantra:

*Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna
Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare
Hare Rama, Hare Rama
Rama Rama, Hare Hare*

On October 9, 1966, Prabhupāda and his followers sat beneath this tree and held the first outdoor chanting session outside of India. Participants chanted for two hours as they danced and played cymbals, tambourines, and other percussive instruments; the event is recognized as the founding of the Hare Krishna religion in the United States. Prabhupada's diverse group that day included Beat poet Allen Ginsberg (1926–1997). Krishna adherents continue to return to the tree to acknowledge its significance.

[The text goes on to say more about American elm trees.]



Taipei City, Taiwan, October 2009

Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare

PRONUNCIATION:

ha-ray, krish-na, ra-ma (rhymes with “drama”)

To hear Śrīla Prabhupāda chanting,
click on the mantra on the Krishna.com home page.

THE VEDIC OBSERVER

Transcendental Commentary on the Issues of the Day

Photographer: Susan Quinlan-Stringer / Agency: Dreamstime.com

True Heroes by Suvarṇa Rādhikā Devī Dāsī

A HOLLYWOOD super-couple breaks up. Monetary negotiations, the division of property, and even the division of children follow, in a blatant display of egoism and unfaithfulness. Their fan base only increases.

A singer is found dead of a drug overdose. He becomes a bigger cult phenomenon.

An actor runs over two people while speeding in a drunken stupor. People continue to love him.

Unfortunately, celebrity worship has become the norm today. Media-generated hype drives society to idolize men and women in certain professions. These people are so steeped in sense gratification and covered by the illusory

energy of the Lord that from a spiritual perspective they often represent everything a human being should not be.

This situation got me thinking about heroes and hero worship. We tend to worship as heroes people we perceive to be better than ourselves. We wish to acquire the qualities of our heroes so that we can improve ourselves. We also look toward them for inspiration when faced with tricky situations in life, or when unsure of how to behave, as we feel they are wiser than us and by emulating them we will find happiness. Most of the time we tend to seek such things as popularity, wealth, beauty, knowledge, and strength. We then try to imbibe the qualities of people who possess these, feeling that by doing so we too will acquire them and become happy.

But if we observe the lives of our heroes carefully, we find that most of them are not happy. They struggle with

problems born of uncontrolled senses, like alcoholism, substance abuse, and failed relationships. They are unable to handle the opulence they have. Moreover, everything in this material world is temporary, and our heroes become frustrated when they lose their opulence. Such people are unfit to be our heroes, as we will never find real happiness by following in their footsteps.

Godly Heroes

Who then is a real hero? The Vedic scriptures give an interesting answer: the perfect servant of God. The *Vedas* describe God as the Supreme Person, and He possesses six

KING BHARATA

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kinds of opulence in full: beauty, strength, wealth, fame, knowledge, and renunciation. These scriptures say that our true happiness lies in our connection with God. We can find happiness by serving our Supreme Father, not by acquiring temporary opulence.

When we understand this point and desire to become an ideal servant of God, then automatically we look toward perfect servants and identify them as our real heroes. Perfect servants of God have completely surrendered to Him, knowing that they are not the supreme controller but simply His

instrument. They lead their lives as directed by the scriptures, such as the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and perform all their duties as an offering to God. They use their talents and qualities in His service. Instead of seeking happiness through external, material objects, they find it in all things related to God and attain inner peace. All virtues appear automatically in them as they proceed on the path back to Kṛṣṇa.

Let us consider the example of Prahlaḍa Mahārāja. He was the son of Hiraṇyakaśipu, one of the most powerful demons to walk the earth. Yet, even at the tender age of five, Prahlaḍa had the courage and faith to go against his entire demoniac family and worship Lord Kṛṣṇa. He was unruffled in all the dangerous situations his father

created for him, because he knew that Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate controller and everything happens by His will alone. To protect Prahlaḍa, Lord Kṛṣṇa descended as Nṛsiṃhadeva, the half-man, half-lion incarnation, and performed His divine pastime of rid-

ding the earth of the demon Hiraṇyakaśipu possessed great opulence, but the real hero turned out to be Prahlaḍa.

Innumerable such real heroes

have walked planet Earth. Society needs them so that people can learn how to lead a meaningful life. Real heroes inspire people to practice the science of God consciousness, develop positive qualities, and achieve eternal bliss.

Worthy Examples

Sadly, the influence of Kali-yuga, the current age, corrupts all things of quality. According to the Vedic literature, in former times leaders of society possessed great spiritual wisdom. Today's leaders are all miniature Hiraṇyakaśipus

who blatantly engage in public self-glorification.

In contrast, the Vedic king Yudhiṣṭhira was so humble that he said he could find no one less qualified than himself. King Śibi was prepared to cut off his own flesh to feed a hawk and thus protect the pigeon it pursued. Contrast him with today's heroes, who are not content even after exploiting the weak and the helpless under their protection. King Bharata ruled the earth but gave up everything for self-realization. Contrast him with today's heroes, who cling to power and fame long after their prime.

I turn with a grateful heart to Śrīla Prabhupāda, a real hero of the modern age. He gave us the Vedic wisdom with its insight on heroism, and he revealed the path to becoming heroes ourselves. Because of his divine grace, the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement now has numerous heroes who are guiding lights to society in this dark age. By following these authentic heroes, one can eventually attain the ultimate hero—Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. ❁

Suvarṇa Rādhikā Devī Dāśī is a twenty-two-year-old software engineer working in a multinational corporation in Pune, Maharashtra, India. She was raised in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and is engaged in services like writing and teaching children about Kṛṣṇa.

YUDHISTHIRA

PRAHLADA MAHARAJA

ARJUNA



MOTHER EARTH

Holder and Giver of Wealth

A life that allows us to reunite with mother earth and offer her products to Kṛṣṇa favors our spiritual growth.

By Viśākhā Devī Dāsī

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA writes, “Whatever is taken from the earth—either from the mines, from the surface of the globe, or from the atmosphere—should always be considered the property of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and should be used for Yajña, Lord Viṣṇu. As soon as the process of *yajña* [sacrifice] is stopped, the earth will withhold all productions—vegetables, trees, plants, fruits, flowers, other agricultural products, and minerals. As confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā*, the process of *yajña* was instituted from the beginning of creation. By the regular performance of *yajña*, the equal distribution of wealth, and the restriction of sense gratification, the entire world will be made peaceful and prosperous.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.18.13, Purport)

A Beautiful Energy

The earth planet, along with its atmosphere, comprises all five of Kṛṣṇa’s material energies, the primary elements: earth, water, fire, air, and ether (space). It is a priceless asset given to us by Kṛṣṇa.

Mother earth is to be honored as a display of God’s energies, and as Kṛṣṇa is beautiful, so the earth is also inherently beautiful.

For devotees living on farm communities established under the guidance of Śrīla Prabhupāda, our task and pleasure is to serve the earth so that she is kept not only beautiful but also healthy, protected, and productive. Toward this end, in Saranagati Village, British Columbia—where my family and I live—a good number of us have gardens. When I established mine I was obliged to clear and level the land, thus giving our small parcel a more tamed beauty (as opposed to a wild beauty), and I fenced it in to protect it. My garden, although modest, keeps me grounded, in touch with the earth, and through empathy with its goings-on, regularly reminded of my vulnerability. It also keeps me and my family in the ecological loop: In our home, nothing organic is thrown in the trash—it all goes into our compost pile, along with manure, then into the garden, where we’re rewarded with dark, crumbly, rich soil.

An added and unexpected benefit to this garden is the untold gratification we get from simply looking out our living room and dining room windows to see our fruit trees—in spring, so laden with white flowers they look snowed-on—and our lush vegetables. There is a certain dignity, a certain ineffable rightness to this view and to the roots we have set down

At right: The author in her garden at Saranagati Village in British Columbia.



in this remote corner of the earth.

When I visit my city friends and see that they throw organic matter—leaves, fruit peels, vegetable parts—in the trash, I have an urge to gather it all up and ship it to Saranagati. Meanwhile, what my city friends eat is often grown by far-away farmers who use harmful chemical fertilizers instead of the organic matter that's been trashed. An ugly anomaly lurks in this scenario.

Pleasing Mother Earth

But whether in the city or the countryside, we can honor mother earth by understanding the natu-

and our well-being are inseparable. If our mentality is unhealthy and we fail to respect the earth, we will pollute her, and that pollution will make us physically unhealthy.

Continuing the theme of how the pleasure of the Lord leads to every part of nature being pleased, Śrīla Prabhupāda writes,

The river will flow profusely to fertilize the land; the oceans will supply sufficient quantities of minerals, pearls and jewels; the forest will supply sufficient wood, drugs, and vegetables, and the seasonal changes will effectively help produce fruits and flowers in profuse quantity. The artificial way of living depending on facto-

with innovation, like genetically modified foods, before the consequences of that innovation are fully explored. By nature's way, growth and change are self-balancing and usually gradual, but growth and change among technologically dominated humans is neither. As a result of this greed-driven shortsightedness, we find that huge tracts of mother earth have been turned into eyesores. The mass of people, lacking a spiritual perspective and spiritual guidance, caught up in surviving and in meaningless pleasure-pursuits, cannot see or break free of the profit-motive mentality; and they are unable to understand Kṛṣṇa's desire: that

each individual live a meaningful and truly happy life by using Kṛṣṇa's energies in His service.

The way we use our land indicates the future of any society, including ours. This means that, overall, we

The amount of real leisure a society enjoys tends to be in inverse proportion to the amount of laborsaving machinery it employs.

ral system her creator, Kṛṣṇa, has established for her well-being and attractiveness. When we do this and offer her yield to Kṛṣṇa with love and devotion, Kṛṣṇa is pleased and mother earth is also pleased. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, "There is enough of everything by the will of the Lord, and we can make proper use of things to live comfortably without enmity between man and man, or man and animal, or man and nature. The control of the Lord is everywhere, and if the Lord is pleased, every part of nature will be pleased." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.10.5, Purport)

Our bodies and the bodies of all living entities are generated from the earth, are transformations of earth with different names according to their transformation, and in the end return to the earth as dust. And our bodies and the vegetation on the body of the earth are intimately related: The vegetables, fruits, and grains—used both as food and as medicine—provided by the earth nourish humans and animals. Thus the earth's well-being

ries and tools can render so-called happiness only to a limited number at the cost of millions. Since the energy of the mass of people is engaged in factory production, the natural products are being hampered, and for this the mass is unhappy. Without being educated properly, the mass of people are following in the footsteps of the vested interests by exploiting natural reserves, and therefore there is acute competition between individual and individual and nation and nation.

—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*
1.10.5, Purport

Misusing the Earth

Just as cattle (so-called "livestock") are dealt with ruthlessly, living and dying only for their owner's profit, similarly agribusinesses exploit the earth, tilling her for productivity and profit at the expense of her beauty, health, and permanence. Such a callous and calculating mentality is symptomatic of passion and is characterized by fanatically rapid changes and a fascination

face a bleak future if we continue using unsustainable farming methods. And what have we gained from taking this risk? More free time? More pleasure? Better health? More happiness?

Ironically—and by the arrangement of the Lord—the amount of real leisure a society enjoys tends to be in inverse proportion to the amount of laborsaving machinery it employs. Generations of people have been lured from farms to urban and suburban living by the promise of an easier life, but judging from the stress level in those areas, that promise is largely unfulfilled. Meanwhile, the more labor-saving machinery a society creates and uses, the more the world's resources are depleted, the more waste we must deal with, the more debt we incur.

And—more irony—in today's society a person's prestige varies in inverse proportion to his or her closeness to actual production. Compare the CEO on the top floor of a skyscraper to the farmer with his hands in the earth. In addition,

modern technology has deprived agriculturalists and laborers of the kind of work they most enjoy—creative, useful work with their own hands and brains. Production—even food production—has been turned into an inhumane chore that does not enrich people but empties them and jeopardizes their health.

Country Life Versus City Life

People in the cities, even our devotee friends, may wonder what we find attractive in a rural community like Saranagati. Where are the diversions, the entertainments, and the many comforts of modern life? And we Saranagati-ites look at our city friends and wonder at the stress they live with, at the fume-fed lives they live, at the television they and their children watch, and at their unending, ever-looming expenses, and wonder why they put up with it all. We see how city life makes people feel insignificant and powerless not before God but before a vast economic system that isolates them and leaves them with little opportunity for their individual economic betterment. We see how they lose confidence in their personal initiative and become highly specialized, fiercely competitive cogs in some big enterprise, without security or independence. Just the impersonal, concrete vastness of city streets, buildings, schools, offices, supermarkets, and crowds makes one feel inconsequential—a pawn.

The sublime spiritual life Śrīla Prabhupāda offered us all can be found in the simplicity that is natural and easy in rural communities—and how much better it is for children to spend their formative years away from the degradation of urban and suburban influences.

As productivity is attained as a byproduct when the land is healthy and beautified, similarly people feel useful and fulfilled when they live as they are meant to live—in concert with the creator. And, just as when the earth is exploited and neglected eventually her productivity diminishes, so a person who,

due to circumstances or greed, does work that is ultimately meaningless will be damaged by an inner sense of uselessness and defeat. In other words, in making production and wealth primary goals (and making spiritual goals questionable), the modern economic system ravishes nature and mutilates human beings. In Śrīla Prabhupāda's words, "What is the need of an artificial luxurious life of cinema, cars, radio, flesh, and hotels? Has this civilization produced anything but quarreling individually and nationally? Has this civilization enhanced the cause of equality and fraternity by sending thousands of men into a hellish factory and the war fields at the whims of a particular man?" (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.10.4, Purport)

Mother Earth and the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa

The products of the earth are meant to be offered to the Lord for His satisfaction. Mother earth is called Vasundhara, meaning "the holder of wealth" (*vasu* means "wealth," and *dhara*, "one who holds"). Whatever is taken from her belongs to Kṛṣṇa and should be used for sacrifice. And when we make sincere offerings to the Lord, we advance in spiritual life as well as in austerity,

cleanliness, truthfulness, and mercy; we become pious and a source of pleasure for the earth.

Although the earth has tolerated atomic explosions, rampant oil drilling, the cutting of forests, bloody wars, and a host of other atrocities, she has the power to withdraw her gifts, to deprive us of life's necessities. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes,

One is mistaken if he thinks that by applying modern machines such as tractors, grains can be produced. If one goes to a desert and uses a tractor, there is still no possibility of producing grains. We may adopt various means, but it is essential to know that the planet earth will stop producing grains if sacrifices are not performed. . . . Now, of course, atheists will not believe in this spiritual method of producing grains, but whether they believe or not, the fact remains that we are not independent to produce grain by mechanical means.
—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.18.8, Purport

The stark reality is that when she is overburdened by the lies and irreligious acts of nondevotees driven by lust, anger, greed, and envy, mother earth may check her production. Again, in Śrīla Prabhupāda's words,

How to Put BTG in Your Will

After providing for their families and loved ones, subscribers may want to put *Back to Godhead* in their wills, thus helping to assure the long-term future of this work. In the USA, bequests are free of estate tax and can substantially reduce the amount of your assets claimed by the government.* You can give needed support for *Back to Godhead* by simply including the following words in your will: *I give, devise, and bequeath to Back to Godhead, 18024 NW 112th Blvd., Alachua, FL 32615 (insert amount being given here) to be used to support Back to Godhead and its related activities, including the Krishna.com website.*

A bequest can be a specific dollar amount, a specific piece of property, a percentage of an estate, or all or part of the residue of an estate. You can also name BTG as a contingency beneficiary in the event someone named in your will is no longer living.

It is recommended that a lawyer help in drafting or amending a will.

*If you live outside the USA, check the estate tax laws for your country.

Although there are immense potencies within the earth for the production of grains, fruits, and flowers, this production is checked by the earth itself when it is misused by nondevotees, who have no spiritual goals. Everything belongs to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and everything can be used for His satisfaction. Things should not be used for the sense gratification of the living entities. This is the whole plan of material nature according to the directions of this material nature.

—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.18.6, Purport

Happiness and the Earth

Happiness comes from spiritual growth not economic gain. But, influenced by this age, individually and collectively we tend to emphasize profit over everything else. Left unchecked, this tendency can run rampant like a noxious weed, resulting in the earth's being desecrated by people who are endlessly restless and dissatisfied, who feel worthless and impotent, and who are held hostage by the economic system. The enormity and indifference of that system produces insecurity,

helplessness, and dependency. No wonder people are desperate for relief and infatuated by diversions.

Meanwhile, Kṛṣṇa conscious rural communities like Saranagati promote a simple, largely stress-free life among fellow spiritual seekers. Such communities can restore our confidence in our own initiative, can encourage self-expression, can help us develop appreciation for the earth and the many creatures of the earth, and can bring us closer to Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Father. Even the simple act of gardening for Kṛṣṇa can enrich us beyond our expectations.

All external activity, including economic, has significance and worth if it furthers our life's goal. Any activity that does not do so, including the many, and much-coveted, forms of material success, will simply leave us unfulfilled and envious of those who have more than we do. Deep down inside even materially successful people know they are missing something critical.

"Human civilizations," Prabhupāda writes, "should depend on the production of material nature without artificially attempting economic

development to turn the world into a chaos of artificial greed and power only for the purpose of artificial luxuries and sense gratification. This is but the life of dogs and hogs." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.10.4, Purport)

A trifling life of making and spending money, or squandered on diversions, is not what we were created for. We are meant to realize our potential for spiritual growth and to experience the happiness that accompanies that growth. One way this process can start is by reuniting with mother earth and offering her bounty to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. ❀

Viśākhā Devī Dāśī has been contributing articles and photographs to BTG for more than thirty years. She lives at Saranagati Village with her extended family, which includes her husband, their two daughters, their son-in-law, and their two-year-old grandson. She has recently published a book about life in Saranagati called Harmony and the Bhagavad-gita: Lessons from a Life-Changing Move to the Wilderness. It's available at the Krishna.com Store.

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Thank God I Am Not God

*God unable to help himself?
A banker realizes the folly of impersonalism.*

By Kālanidhi Dāsa

I CAME TO KNOW about ISKCON as a serious spiritual movement in the year 2002. A senior executive in the State Bank of India, I was posted in Mumbai as a relationship manager to high-value corporate clients and had a tight work schedule. I never dreamed that the answers to my innermost quest would be found in this commercial capital, and so close to my workplace.

Born in a *brāhmaṇa* family, I had been brought up as a Śiva worshiper. At home we used to worship demigods such as Gaṇeśa, Kartikeya, Sarasvatī, and Durgā.

We observed religious festivals with gusto, despite my father's limited means. Thanks to my upbringing, right from my early age I memorized and feelingly recited Sanskrit verses and mantras for different gods and goddesses. But as I grew up among materialistic friends in



Kālanidhi Dāsa and his wife, Śyāma Vallabhī Devī Dāsī.

school, I started developing doubts about these practices and almost became an agnostic in college. I picked up habits like meat-eating, smoking intoxicants, and regular cinema-going, as well as reading popular gossip magazines.

After graduation, I became a

bank officer and was completely materialistic. With growing skepticism about religion, I was shy of even revealing to friends that I visited temples. My religiosity morphed into a vague faith that there is an unchanging unitary reality behind the changing nature and that merging into that formless reality is the goal of existence. This can be done anytime we choose because we are identical to that truth and there is no urgency. All life is a dream, with no serious consequences to our actions. There is no God as such, and hence we can do the work of self-

realization by our own efforts at a time of our choosing. I also concluded that all religions exploited our gullibility. My vices continued to grow. I took pride in them and believed they brought me closer to friends. Guilt and shame, I thought, are a sign of immaturity, and real

advancement in life comes from overcoming these limitations.

But my philosophy, which found an echo in many modern thinkers, left me all alone to achieve the great leap from material consciousness to spiritual consciousness, and I found myself ill equipped to do so.

A Blind Pursuit

However, incongruently, I continued vainly chasing after God with no clear conception of what I wanted. In 1984, while I was working in London, a friend introduced me to some occult books on yoga and I entered a new world of arm-chair philosophy—reading many books and debating, without any realization or *sādhana* (regulated spiritual practice). The books were interesting, and I thought they would change my life forever. But

except for getting a swollen head by knowing more than others, I made no advancement.

My desire to know more of spirituality was growing, and the pain and disappointments from chasing many mirage-like movements was causing great anguish. My journey can be summarized as follows:

I ran after many so-called gurus and learned *āsanas*, *prāṇāyāma*, and meditations on the formless and nameless.

I enrolled with great hope in a correspondence course to learn *kriya-yoga* disciplines and took initiation too, but very soon gave up *kriya-yoga* as useless.

I mastered a famous yogi's books on Māyāvāda philosophy, the philosophy that stresses the impersonal feature of the Absolute Truth and states that the form of even the Supreme Lord is *māyā*, or illusion.

I used to quote his books with ease. Yet, after several years of remaining enthralled in the philosophy that “I am God in illusion thinking of myself as human,” I finally gave it up as impractical. Despite sitting with closed eyes for days, I could not close the doors on my mind that thwarted me every time. It was frustrating to think that although I was God, I could not help myself, nor could I expect anyone higher (higher than God?) to help me.

I took mantra initiation (*dikṣā*) from many masters, not even knowing what initiation meant. Some of these encounters appear bizarre and ludicrous to me now, but not to the tortured and hankering soul I was.

I practiced *haṭha-yoga* with many reputed institutions but soon realized that despite their pronouncements, they had nothing to do with spirituality.

I practiced *kriya-yoga* for four years, but apart from helping me develop a healthier body and sharper mind, it had no impact in my spiritual development; rather it retarded the process by making me more body-centered.

I also followed some famous *sahaja-mārga* gurus for a while, but none of them gave any prescriptions to implement in life, nor did they elaborate on life's goals. People simply go to gaze at the guru's face, listen to lectures, and hope the guru will remove all material and spiritual obstacles. The aspirant has to do nothing, except to keep visiting.

I devoured many voluminous books containing the conversations and talks of famous saints. The books were known for the pithy wisdom replete in them. However, I ended up only being confused as these so-called saints held no specific guidance on what I should do now. Rather, mostly they justified doing anything, saying things like *yato mat, tato path*: “Whatever you like is your path.”

My one good fortune, which I realize only now, was that in all my wild goose chasing, I was not seeking *siddhis* (mystic powers)



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(See “Centers,” pages 59–61, or visit directory.krishna.com.)

or miracles, or even freedom from suffering. I would soon get fed up with my gurus and move on, without suffering much damage to my psyche or wallet. I guess many of them were not bad people, but in different ways were ignorant and deluded by their ego, senses, or desire for prestige.

Light in a Dentist's Clinic

As a married man with many responsibilities, my sufferings were compounded, but this only increased my hankering for the Truth, which I knew instinctively would liberate me forever. At this time, in June of 2002, a root-canal problem drove me to a dentist, ISKCON devotee Dr. Nitya Kṛṣṇa Dāsa, in Sion, a Mumbai suburb. In his clinic, I saw *Back to Godhead* magazines for the first time. Awaiting my turn, I absorbed myself in those issues.

Having read many spiritual books and magazines in my tortuous search for Truth, I found a unique appeal in these magazines, with contents simultaneously erudite and simple. They were refreshing in their approach and spoke directly to my heart from a different plane. The contents were simply a celebration of a spiritual reality and made no effort to talk about material sufferings and their solutions. My soul made an immediate connection. The spiritual aura of the clinic completed the effect. My follow-up visits strengthened my attraction to the clinic, and on my final visit I asked the good dentist how I could subscribe to these magazines.

On a Sunday afternoon soon thereafter, Dr. Nitya Kṛṣṇa Dāsa took me in his car to ISKCON's Rādhā-Gopīnātha temple in Chowpatty. That evening I joined a *Bhagavad-gītā* course at the temple, taught by Rādhā-Gopīnātha Dāsa. My bookish knowledge and Māyāvādī background assailed me for a while, but the beauty and perfection of what I was hearing was obvious from the very beginning, and the love and compassion of

the presenter, along with the nice *prasāda* at the end of each class, convinced me very quickly. The concept of a personal God, which I lovingly nourished as a child (though there were many gods) and later on discarded as unscientific, sentimental, and childish, Rādhā-Gopīnātha Dāsa presented again so beautifully and convincingly that tears came uncontrollably as I listened. A typical Māyāvādī's questions, which I thought were unanswerable, he comprehensively handled with ease. For example, if I were God and temporarily in illusion, then that would mean illu-

sion was greater than God. How could God fall into illusion? If I had to undergo some practices to rid myself of this illusion, then how could I be God, because God, being the supreme controller, need not resort to practices; He could come out of illusion anytime. If this illusory existence was my pastime, then why was I suffering in this pastime and why did I want to come out of it? These questions convinced me that God is a person.

Life Changes

During the week, my wife joined the classes. I don't know how my official duties permitted me to be at the temple on time for the whole week. Powerfully symbolic dreams with profound messages kept me in a reverie in daytime as well. I was so moved that I disposed of our television shortly and read the complete *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* within the same week. My wife and I started chanting sixteen rounds of the *mahā-mantra* on our beads shortly thereafter. Implementing the regulative principles—no meat-eating, no illicit sex, no intoxication,

no gambling—was never a problem because the Kṛṣṇa consciousness process and Vaiṣṇava association were more than compensation for the small austerities.

We became counselees of Nitya Kṛṣṇa Dāsa and started attending weekly counseling meetings. We also started attending the weekly *Bhagavad-gītā* program in Sion on Tuesdays and got the wonderful association of Muralīdhara Dāsa and other Vaiṣṇavas, whose compassion and enthusiasm made a significant impact on both of us. Vamśīdhara Dāsa and his wife, Jāhnavāpriyā Devī, spent long hours discussing

I would soon get fed up with my gurus and move on, without suffering much damage to my psyche or wallet.

the practical aspects of Kṛṣṇa consciousness with us, enhancing our faith and determination. From time to time we would even take to our counselor personal problems that had no direct relevance to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and he mercifully guided us on the right path.

That October, I went on a pilgrimage to Vrindavan. The close association of Vaiṣṇavas had a transforming effect. Waking up at 3:00 A.M. after sleeping only four hours, taking a cold-water bath, and walking barefoot in the dark to *maṅgala-ārati* at Śrīla Prabhu-pāda's Samādhi—these were not austerities, but ecstatic experiences.

Moving Out of Mumbai

My stay in Mumbai continued until December 2003, when I got a promotion. It was a recognition I could not relish, however, as it meant leaving Mumbai. Despite being under heavy work and family pressures and tensions during my eighteen months in Mumbai, I clearly recollect even today that I was experiencing the greatest happiness of my life throughout that time. By

the unending mercy of Vaiṣṇavas, even after leaving Mumbai I remained in the association of devotees, which protected my fledgling creeper of devotion. By the same mercy, now I am back in Mumbai and live close to the temple.

Having meandered across many spiritual movements trying to satisfy my quest for definitive answers about ultimate reality, I now realize why the pursuits failed me. The mental speculations of armchair philosophers can never satisfy the soul. All questions arise apparently at the mental level, but the trigger lies with the soul, seeking to regain the intrinsic happiness it has lost.

has learned from his spiritual master. Kṛṣṇa is the founder of the *paramparā*, and the devotee's connection to this system through the spiritual master is the key to accessing Kṛṣṇa's mercy.

Māyāvāda philosophers unquestioningly accept that individual existence is both unreal and miserable and see a solution only in committing spiritual suicide by merging with the Absolute. They cannot imagine that the soul could ever be fully satisfied and eternally happy, without impediment, in loving reciprocation with the Lord. Their followers soon cloy from the endless dry speculation. Because their

rounds. My brothers and sisters have been influenced tremendously to take spiritual life seriously. In my workplace, too, colleagues have shown enthusiasm to learn about the philosophy and practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The depth of my spiritual path and my earnestness to follow it impress them. They appreciate as a genuine alternative the simple yet profound and practical answers the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness has for the complex problems of the material world.

I was able to assist a team of devotees distributing books on Kṛṣṇa consciousness in Ludhiana and in Vijayawada, where I was posted for a while. I organized a well-attended public program in Jalandhar to introduce industrialists and prominent citizens to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I also arranged a *Bhagavad-gītā* course for the employees of our Vijayawada

zonal office for five days, and they greatly appreciated the initiative. In Vijayawada I organized a *Bhagavad-gītā* study group in my residence for one evening each week for a year.

I am eternally grateful to Dr. Nitya Kṛṣṇa Dāsa and his wife, Vraja Līlā Devī, for guiding me to this wonderful *saṅkīrtana* movement of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. It is the prescribed process to liberate the soul from the evil influences of Kali-yuga, the current age. But for their compassion I would have been lost among the other countless numbers of suffering souls vainly looking for redemption by taking shelter of sense gratification or mental speculation, which is like looking for water in a desert.

I pray at the lotus feet of all Vaiṣṇavas and my spiritual master that I eternally remain grateful to the mercy they have showered upon me and try to repay my debt by always trying to bring other conditioned souls to the shelter of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. 🌸

In my workplace, colleagues have shown enthusiasm to learn about the philosophy and practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Gurus who do not reveal this truth but only pander to the whim of creating and solving endless questions have really not understood the problem and therefore can satisfy neither their followers nor themselves. Even if they do, the solution is temporary, and new doubts will invariably arise.

Founded on Spiritual Authority

Unlike popular spiritual movements whose founders use scriptures only to lend legitimacy but do not fully believe in them, preferring to propagate their own mental speculations, ISKCON follows the recommended method of accepting the authority of guru, *sādhū*, and *śāstra*—or one's own guru, the previous gurus in the Vaiṣṇava line, and the Vedic scriptures. The bona fide guru is a transparent medium for God's mercy and continues the *paramparā* system, or the line of spiritual teachers that traces all the way back to Kṛṣṇa Himself. The genuine guru never deviates from *śāstra* and humbly repeats what he

souls seek ever-new happiness, their gurus must constantly invent many cheating methods to infuse some variety to keep them.

Having searched everywhere for answers, at last I find peace and happiness reigning in my heart and an assurance that I have found the ultimate truth. My two sons, who have witnessed my restless quest over the years, sometimes taunt me that I will move on once again to another guru. But now they know this time it is different, and they are happy too.

Unbelievable Auspiciousness

Many unbelievable blessings have come to me and those near to me in the last few years. My parents, who were in their late seventies, were with me in Mumbai. I took them to the temple a few times. After some Vaiṣṇava association, they started chanting sixteen rounds regularly. My father increased his rounds to eighty. They maintained this commitment until they passed away a year ago. My parents-in-law and a brother-in-law are chanting sixteen

Referred to as “the ripe fruit of the tree of Vedic literature,” *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the most complete and authoritative exposition of Vedic knowledge. Five thousand years ago the great sage Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa composed this *purāṇa*, or history, to explain the essence of spiritual knowledge. Here we present *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in serialized form, with the original Sanskrit text, transliteration, word meanings, translation, and purports by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

DHRUVA MAHĀRĀJA SEEKS REVENGE

*When his brother is killed,
Dhruva Mahārāja sets out to destroy the culprits.*

CANTO 4: CHAPTER 9

67 आत्मानं च प्रवयसमाकलय्य विशाम्पतिः
वनं विरक्तः प्रातिष्ठद्विमृशन्नात्मनो गतिम्

*ātmānaṁ ca pravayasam
ākalayya viśāmpatiḥ
vanam viraktaḥ prātiṣṭhad
vimṛśann ātmano gatim*

ātmānam—himself; *ca*—also; *pravayasam*—advanced in age; *ākalayya*—considering; *viśāmpatiḥ*—King Uttānapāda; *vanam*—to the forest; *viraktaḥ*—detached; *prātiṣṭhat*—departed; *vimṛśan*—deliberating on; *ātmanah*—of the self; *gatim*—salvation.

After considering his advanced age and deliberating on the welfare of his spiritual self, King Uttānapāda detached himself from worldly affairs and entered the forest.

PURPORT: This is the sign of a *rājārṣi*. King Uttānapāda was very opulent and was emperor of the world, and these attachments were certainly very great. Modern politicians are not as great as kings like Mahārāja Uttānapāda, but because they get some political power for some days, they become so much attached to their positions that they

never retire unless they are removed from their posts by cruel death or killed by some opposing political party. It is within our experience that the politicians in India do not quit their positions until death. This was not the practice in olden days, as it is evident from the behavior of King Uttānapāda. ❶ Immediately after installing his worthy son Dhruva Mahārāja on the throne, he left his home and palace.

There are hundreds and thousands of instances like this in which kings, in their mature age, would give up their kingdoms and go to the forest to practice austerity. Practice of austerity is the main business of human life. As Mahārāja Dhruva practiced austerity in his early age, his father, Mahārāja Uttānapāda, in his old age also practiced austerity in the forest. ❷ In modern days, however, it is not possible to give up one's home and go to the forest to practice austerity, but if people of all ages would take shelter of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement and practice the simple austerities of no illicit sex, no intoxication, no gambling, and no meat-eating, and chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra regularly (sixteen rounds), by this practical

- (1) What did King Uttānapāda do after installing Dhruva Mahārāja on the throne?
- (2) In modern days, how can one get salvation from this material world?

method it would be a very easy task to get salvation from this material world.

CANTO 4: CHAPTER 10

मैत्रेय उवाच

1 प्रजापतेर्दुहितरं शिशुमारस्य वै ध्रुवः
उपयेमे भ्रमिं नाम तत्सुतौ कल्पवत्सरौ

maitreya uvāca
prajāpater duhitaram
śiśumārasya vai dhruvaḥ
upayeme bhramiṁ nāma
tat-sutau kalpa-vatsarau

maitreyaḥ uvāca—the great sage Maitreya continued; *prajāpateḥ*—of the Prajāpati; *duhitaram*—daughter; *śiśu-mārasya*—of Śiśumāra; *vai*—certainly; *dhruvaḥ*—Dhruva Mahārāja; *upayeme*—married; *bhramiṁ*—Bhrami; *nāma*—named; *tat-sutau*—her sons; *kalpa*—Kalpa; *vatsarau*—Vatsara.

The great sage Maitreya said: My dear Vidura, thereafter Dhruva Mahārāja married the daughter of Prajāpati Śiśumāra, whose name was Bhrami, and two sons named Kalpa and Vatsara were born of her.

PURPORT: It appears that Dhruva Mahārāja married after being installed on the throne of his father and after the departure of his father to the forest for self-realization. It is very important to note in this connection that since Mahārāja Uttānapāda was greatly affectionate towards his son, and since it is the duty of a father to get his sons and daughters married as quickly as possible, why did he not get his son married before he left home? ③ The answer is that Mahārāja Uttānapāda was a *rājarsi*, saintly king. Although he was busy in his political affairs and duties of government management, he was very anxious for self-realization. Therefore as soon as his son Dhruva Mahārāja was quite worthy to take charge of the government, he took this opportunity to leave home, just like his son, who, without fear, left home for self-realization, even at the age of five years. These are rare instances from which we can see that the importance of spiritual realization is above all other important work. Mahārāja Uttānapāda knew very well that to get his son Dhruva Mahārāja married

was not so important that it should take preference to his going away to the forest for self-realization.

2 इलायामपि भार्यायां वायोः पुत्र्यां महाबलः
पुत्रमुत्कलनामानं योषिद्रत्नमजीजनत्

ilāyām api bhāryāyām
vāyoḥ putryām mahā-balaḥ
putram utkala-nāmānam
yoṣid-ratnam ajījanat

ilāyām—unto his wife named Ilā; *api*—also; *bhāryāyām*—unto his wife; *vāyoḥ*—of the demigod Vāyu (controller of air); *putryām*—unto the daughter; *mahā-balaḥ*—the greatly powerful Dhruva Mahārāja; *putram*—son; *utkala*—Utkala; *nāmānam*—of the name; *yoṣit*—female; *ratnam*—jewel; *ajījanat*—he begot.

The greatly powerful Dhruva Mahārāja had another wife, named Ilā, who was the daughter of the demigod Vāyu. By her he begot a son named Utkala and a very beautiful daughter.

3 उत्तमस्त्वकृतोद्वाहो मृगयायां बलीयसा
हतः पुण्यजनेनाद्रौ तन्मातास्य गतिं गता

uttamas tv akṛtodvāho
mṛgayāyām baliyasā
hataḥ puṇya-janenādrau
tan-mātāsyā gatiṁ gatā

uttamaḥ—Uttama; *tu*—but; *akṛta*—without; *udvāhaḥ*—marriage; *mṛgayāyām*—on a hunting excursion; *baliyasā*—very powerful; *hataḥ*—was killed; *puṇya-janena*—by a Yakṣa; *adrau*—on the Himalaya Mountains; *tat*—his; *mātā*—mother (Suruci); *asya*—of her son; *gatiṁ*—way; *gatā*—followed.

Dhruva Mahārāja's younger brother ④ Uttama, who was still unmarried, once went on a hunting excursion ⑤ and was killed by a powerful Yakṣa in the Himalaya Mountains. Along with him, his mother, Suruci, also followed the path of her son [she died].

4 ध्रुवो भ्रातृवधं श्रुत्वा कोपामर्षशुचार्पितः
जैत्रं स्यन्दनमास्थाय गतः पुण्यजनालयम्

dhruvo bhrāṭṛ-vadham śrutvā
kopāmarṣa-śucārpitaḥ
jaitraṁ syandanam āsthāya
gataḥ puṇya-janālayam

dhruvaḥ—Dhruva Mahārāja; *bhrāṭṛ-vadham*—the killing of his brother; *śrutvā*—hearing this news; *kopa*—anger; *amarṣa*—vengeance; *śucā*—lamentation; *arpitaḥ*—being

- (3) Why did King Uttānapāda leave home before getting his son married?
- (4) What was the name of Dhruva Mahārāja's younger brother?
- (5) Who killed Dhruva Mahārāja's younger brother?

filled with; *jaitram*—victorious; *syandanam*—chariot; *āsthāya*—getting on; *gataḥ*—went; *puṇya-jana-ālayam*—to the city of the Yakṣas.

When Dhruva Mahārāja heard of the killing of his brother Uttama by the Yakṣas in the Himalaya Mountains, being overwhelmed with lamentation and anger, he got on his chariot and went out for victory over the city of the Yakṣas, 6 Alakāpuri.

PURPORT: Dhruva Mahārāja's becoming angry, overwhelmed with grief, and envious of the enemies was not incompatible with his position as a great devotee. It is a misunderstanding that a devotee should not be angry, envious, or overwhelmed by lamentation. 7 Dhruva Mahārāja was the king, and when his brother was unceremoniously killed, it was his duty to take revenge against the Yakṣas from the Himalayas.

5 गत्वोदीचीं दिशं राजा रुद्रानुचरसेविताम्
ददर्श हिमवद्द्रोण्यां पुरीं गुह्यकसङ्कुलाम्

*gatvodiciṁ diśaṁ rājā
rudrānucara-sevitām
dadarśa himavad-droṇyāṁ
purīm guhyaka-saṅkulām*

gatvā—going; *udiciṁ*—northern; *diśaṁ*—direction; *rājā*—King Dhruva; *rudra-anucara*—by followers of Rudra, Lord Śiva; *sevitām*—inhabited; *dadarśa*—saw; *himavat*—Himalayan; *droṇyāṁ*—in a valley; *purīm*—a city; *guhyaka*—ghostly persons; *saṅkulām*—full of.

Dhruva Mahārāja went to the northern direction of the Himalayan range. In a valley he saw a city full of ghostly persons who were followers of Lord Śiva.

PURPORT: In this verse it is stated that the Yakṣas are more or less devotees of Lord Śiva. By this indication the Yakṣas may be taken to be the Himalayan tribes like the Tibetans.

6 दध्मौ शङ्खं बृहद्बाहुः खं दिशश्चानुनादयन्
येनोद्विग्नदृशः क्षत्तरुपदेव्योऽत्रसन्भृशम्

*dadhmau śaṅkhaṁ bṛhad-bāhuḥ
khaṁ diśaś cānunādayan
yenodvigna-dṛśaḥ kṣattar
upadevyo 'trasan bhṛśam*

dadhmau—blew; *śaṅkham*—conchshell; *bṛhat-bāhuḥ*—the mighty-armed; *khaṁ*—the sky; *diśaś ca*—and all directions; *anunādayan*—causing to resound; *yena*—by which; *udvigna-dṛśaḥ*—appeared very anxious; *kṣat-taḥ*—my dear Vidura; *upadevyah*—the wives of the Yakṣas; *atrasan*—became frightened; *bhṛśam*—greatly.

Maitreya continued: My dear Vidura, as soon as Dhruva Mahārāja reached Alakāpuri, 8 he immediately blew his conchshell, and the sound reverberated throughout the entire sky and in every direction. The wives of the Yakṣas became very much frightened. From their eyes it was apparent that they were full of anxiety.

7 ततो निष्क्रम्य बलिन उपदेवमहाभटाः
असहन्तस्त्रिनादमभिपेतुरुदायुधाः

*tato niṣkramya balina
upadeva-mahā-bhaṭāḥ
asahantas tan-ninādam
abhipetur udāyudhāḥ*

tataḥ—thereafter; *niṣkramya*—coming out; *balinaḥ*—very powerful; *upadeva*—of Kuvera; *mahā-bhaṭāḥ*—great soldiers; *asahantaḥ*—unable to tolerate; *tat*—of the conchshell; *ninādam*—sound; *abhipetuḥ*—attacked; *udāyudhāḥ*—equipped with various weapons.

O hero Vidura, 9 the greatly powerful heroes of the Yakṣas, unable to tolerate the resounding vibration of the conchshell of Dhruva Mahārāja, came forth from their city with weapons and attacked Dhruva.

8 स तानापततो वीर उग्रधन्वा महारथः
एकैकं युगपत्सर्वानहन् बाणैस्त्रिभिस्त्रिभिः

*sa tāt āpatato vīra
ugra-dhanvā mahā-rathaḥ
ekaikaṁ yugapat sarvān
ahan bāṇais tribhis tribhiḥ*

saḥ—Dhruva Mahārāja; *tāt*—all of them; *āpatataḥ*—falling upon him; *vīraḥ*—hero; *ugra-dhanvā*—powerful bowman; *mahā-rathaḥ*—who could fight with many chariots; *eka-ekam*—one after another; *yugapat*—simultaneously; *sarvān*—all of them; *ahan*—killed; *bāṇaiḥ*—by arrows; *tribhiḥ tribhiḥ*—by threes.

Dhruva Mahārāja, who was a great charioteer and certainly a great bowman also, immediately began to kill them by simultaneously discharging arrows three at a time.

- (6) What is the name of the city of the Yakṣas?
- (7) Why was Dhruva Mahārāja's anger against the Yakṣas justified?
- (8) What was the first thing Dhruva Mahārāja did when he reached the city of the Yakṣas?
- (9) How did the Yakṣas respond to Dhruva Mahārāja's arrival?

९ ते वै ललाटलग्नैस्तैरिषुभिः सर्व एव हि
मत्वा निरस्तमात्मानमाशंसन् कर्म तस्य तत्

*te vai lalāṭa-lagnais tair
iṣubhiḥ sarva eva hi
matvā nirastam ātmānam
āsaṁsan karma tasya tat*

te—they; *vai*—certainly; *lalāṭa-lagnaiḥ*—intent upon their heads; *tair*—by those; *iṣubhiḥ*—arrows; *sarve*—all of them; *eva*—certainly; *hi*—without fail; *matvā*—thinking; *nirastam*—defeated; *ātmānam*—themselves; *āsaṁsan*—praised; *karma*—action; *tasya*—of him; *tat*—that.

When the heroes of the Yakṣas saw that all their heads were being thus threatened by Dhruva Mahārāja, they could very easily understand their awkward position, and they concluded that they would certainly be defeated. But, as heroes, they lauded the action of Dhruva.

PURPORT: ⑩ This spirit of fighting in a sporting attitude is very significant in this verse. The Yakṣas were severely attacked. Dhruva Mahārāja was their enemy, but still, upon witnessing the wonderful, heroic acts of Mahārāja Dhruva, they were very pleased with him. This straightforward appreciation of an enemy's prowess is a characteristic of real *kṣatriya* spirit.

१० तेऽपि चामुममृष्यन्तः पादस्पर्शमिवोरगाः
शरैरविध्यन् युगपद् द्विगुणं प्रचिकीर्षवः

*te 'pi cāmuṁ amṛṣyantaḥ
pāda-sparśam ivoragāḥ
śarair avidhyan yugapat
dvi-guṇam pracikīrṣavaḥ*

te—the Yakṣas; *api*—also; *ca*—and; *amum*—at Dhruva; *amṛṣyantaḥ*—being intolerant of; *pāda-sparśam*—being touched by the feet; *iva*—like; *uragāḥ*—serpents; *śaraiḥ*—with arrows; *avidhyan*—struck; *yugapat*—simultaneously; *dvi-guṇam*—twice as much; *pracikīrṣavaḥ*—trying to retaliate.

Just like serpents, who cannot tolerate being trampled upon by anyone's feet, the Yakṣas, being intolerant of the wonderful prowess of Dhruva Mahārāja, threw twice as many arrows—six from each of their soldiers—and thus they very valiantly exhibited their prowess.

- (10) On seeing Dhruva Mahārāja's prowess, how did the Yakṣas show their *kṣatriya* spirit?
(11) How many Yakṣa soldiers were present to fight with Dhruva Mahārāja?

११ ततः परिघनिस्त्रिंशैः प्रासशूलपरश्वधैः
शक्त्यृष्टिभिर्भुशुण्डीभिश्चित्रवाजैः शरैरपि
१२ अभ्यवर्षन् प्रकुपिताः सरथं सहस्राथिम्
इच्छन्तस्तत्प्रतीकर्तुमयुतानां त्रयोदश

*tataḥ parigha-nistrimśaiḥ
prāsaśūla-paraśvadhaiḥ
śakty-ṛṣṭibhir bhuṣuṇḍibhiḥ
citra-vājaiḥ śarair api
abhyavarṣan prakupitāḥ
saratham saha-sārathim
icchantas tat pratikartum
ayutānām trayodaśa*

tataḥ—thereupon; *parigha*—with iron bludgeons; *nistrimśaiḥ*—and swords; *prāsa-śūla*—with tridents; *paraśvadhaiḥ*—and lances; *śakti*—with pikes; *ṛṣṭibhiḥ*—and spears; *bhuṣuṇḍibhiḥ*—with *bhuṣuṇḍi* weapons; *citra-vājaiḥ*—having various feathers; *śaraiḥ*—with arrows; *api*—also; *abhyavarṣan*—they showered Dhruva; *prakupitāḥ*—being angry; *sa-ratham*—along with his chariot; *saha-sārathim*—along with his charioteer; *icchantas*—desiring; *tat*—Dhruva's activities; *pratikartum*—to counteract; *ayutānām*—of ten-thousands; *trayodaśa*—thirteen.

The Yakṣa soldiers ⑪ were 130,000 strong, all greatly angry, and all desiring to defeat the wonderful activities of Dhruva Mahārāja. With full strength they showered upon Mahārāja Dhruva, along with his chariot and charioteer, various types of feathered arrows, parighas [iron bludgeons], nistrimśas [swords], prāsaśūlas [tridents], paraśvadhās [lances], śaktis [pikes], ṛṣṭis [spears], and bhuṣuṇḍi weapons.

१३ औत्तानपादिः स तदा शस्त्रवर्षेण भूरिणा
न एवादृश्यताच्छन्न आसारेण यथा गिरिः

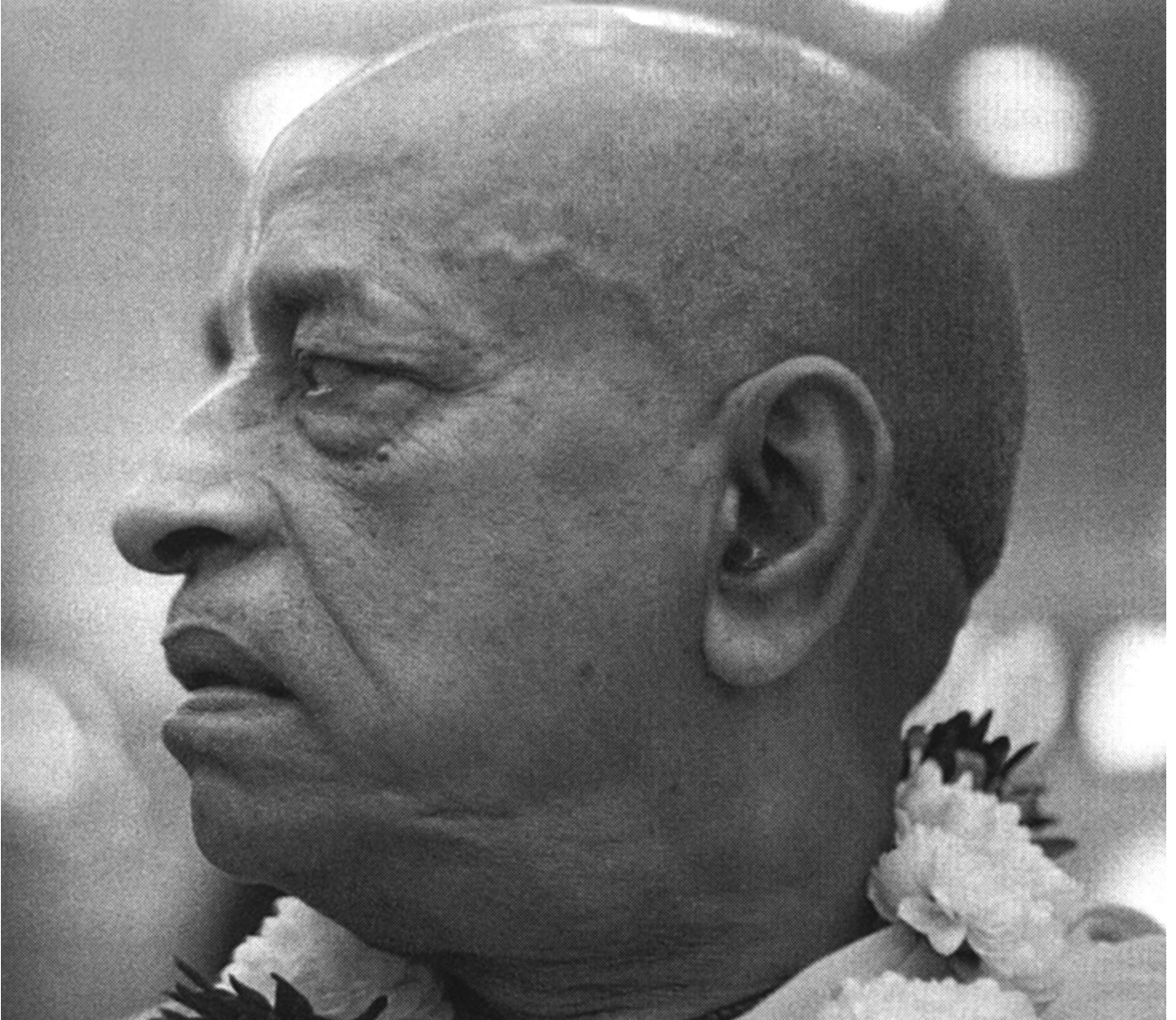
*auttānapādiḥ sa tadā
śastra-varṣeṇa bhūriṇā
na evādṛśyatācchanna
āsāreṇa yathā giriḥ*

auttānapādiḥ—Dhruva Mahārāja; *saḥ*—he; *tadā*—at that time; *śastra-varṣeṇa*—by a shower of weapons; *bhūriṇā*—incessant; *na*—not; *eva*—certainly; *adṛśyata*—was visible; *ācchannaḥ*—being covered; *āsāreṇa*—by constant rainfall; *yathā*—as; *giriḥ*—a mountain.

Dhruva Mahārāja was completely covered by an incessant shower of weapons, just as a mountain is covered by incessant rainfall.

[Continued in the next issue.]

No Spiritual Pleasure by Merging



This conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, one of his disciples, and a lawyer took place in August 1976 on an early-morning walk in Hyderabad, India.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: At the present moment nearly everyone is in darkness. *Na te viduḥ svārtha-gatiṁ hi viṣṇum* [Bhāgavatam 7.5.31]; they do not know that the goal of life is to know Viṣṇu, or Kṛṣṇa. Out of

ignorance they are accepting this material life as everything. But they are forgetting about the problems of birth and death. These are their real problems. They are making plans to solve so many problems, but they have no plan to solve these problems.

Lawyer: Is it possible, then, for us to conquer death?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Oh, yes—by becoming fully Kṛṣṇa conscious.

Lawyer: And in that case there

would be no death and no rebirth?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. You are eternal, and your original home is in the spiritual world. But by karma you are put into this material world. Then you must struggle, like a fish out of water. If somehow or other a fish is taken from the water and put onto the land, his life is simply a struggle. And if he is again put into the water, his life is in its natural condition.

Lawyer: So for us the natural condition is back to Godhead?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes.

Lawyer: It's a mystery, though, how we came from the divine life to this life.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: What is the mystery? Is there a mystery how one is brought into the criminal court? What is the mystery?

Disciple: It is simply our karma.

Lawyer: But we must start somewhere.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: What is the starting point of a criminal? He wants to violate the law, and he commits his first crime and becomes a criminal. You are a gentleman, but you can also become a criminal if you like. It depends on you. If you violate the law, you become a criminal. If you don't violate the law, you

remain in your lawful position.

Similarly, as soon as you defy God and try to become independent, you start your karma and immediately come to the material world. And when you again surrender to God, you stop your karma. So stopping and starting your karma is in your hands. You start your own life in the material world, and you can stop it also.

Lawyer: But if the soul was once a gentleman . . . ?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: The soul is eternally a gentleman.

Lawyer: Ahh. But is the soul who takes birth as an animal also a gentleman?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. He is a gentleman by nature, but a criminal by artificial means.

Lawyer: But suppose you attain

mokṣa [liberation]. Is that the same as returning to the spiritual world?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: There are two kinds of *mokṣa*. In the first kind one tries to remain in the impersonal Brahman effulgence. But one cannot remain there eternally. The Brahman effulgence is like the sky. You may go up into the sky, but you cannot remain there. If you don't get any shelter, you have to come down again. You are a living entity and you want enjoyment, but what enjoyment will you find in the sky? You require society, friends, love—everything. But none of these are there in the Brahman effulgence.

So, the *mokṣa* of the impersonalists is temporary because although they think that by merging into the impersonal Brahman they will be happy, they cannot be happy there. *Āruhya kṛcchreṇa param padam tataḥ patanty adhaḥ* [*Bhāgavatam* 10.2.32]: although they go up to the impersonal Brahman effulgence, because there is no *ānanda* [spiritual pleasure] they come down again to find pleasure in the material world. By nature the living entity seeks pleasure (*ānanda-mayo 'bhyāsāt*). But you do not get any *ānanda* in the Brahman effulgence.

Lawyer: Isn't merging into Brahman itself *ānanda*?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. It is eternal existence, but no *ānanda*. Can you remain eternally without pleasure? No, so you have to come back down again to this material world, because here there is something like *ānanda*, although the pleasure here is temporary. So unless you go to God and dance with Him, you'll have to come back to this world. But the impersonalists cannot reconcile how God can be a person and not have to suffer birth and death like them. Because they have had a very bad experience of being a person here, they think the Absolute must be impersonal in order to be perfect. They are *mudhās*, fools; they are not intelligent.

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Profiles of Kṛṣṇa-related websites



The ISKCON News TV Channel—www.dandavats.com/haribol—presents videos and news stories by and for devotees of Kṛṣṇa.

The use of video by devotees to share news of programs and festivals is on the increase as the technology to do so becomes cheaper and more available. The ISKCON News TV Channel draws on sources from around the

world to offer a broad range of material, updated every few days.

“We want to bring good news to the attention of the devotees,” says Citraka Dāsa, who manages the site. “The main attraction is that we present many interesting and uplifting videos. We don’t concentrate on a particular issue; instead, we aspire to give a picture

of what is happening in ISKCON.”

When you navigate your browser to www.dandavats.com/haribol the videos begin to play one after the other, so you can sit back and enjoy them. If you move your mouse to the left of the screen, a pop-out menu appears, and you can scroll up or down through the available videos and play the ones you choose.

Every time you visit you’ll find videos presenting programs and festivals from different ISKCON centers, plays, documentaries, book and music reviews, as well as interviews, talks, and much more.

One of the features of the TV channel is the ISKCON Press Review, a weekly digest of news stories and reports drawn from devotees’ web sites. The Press Review helps you keep up with the latest Internet-based reports. Each review includes links to the sites mentioned, so you can check them out yourself.

“We’re not interested in delving into controversies or complex debates,” Citraka says. “Our aim is to inspire devotees by letting them see the wonderful things going on in our international society. In that way, we hope to motivate everyone to participate further in their own communities and deepen their devotional service.”

—Antony Brennan

Lawyer: But what is the stage at which the *ātmā* [the soul] merges with the *paramātmā* [the Supersoul]?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: You cannot merge. You may simply imagine you are merging. You can enter into the spiritual atmosphere, but without *ānanda* you cannot stay there. Therefore you have to come back again to this material world. Suppose you are put in some place where you cannot practice law. How long will you remain there? If I say, “Please remain here happily without any

law practice,” how long could you remain? You will want some activity, some pleasure. That is your nature.

So, here in the material world we are all trying to get some pleasure, but that pleasure is temporary. It is not satisfying us. Therefore, being disgusted, we want to stop material life and merge into Brahman. But that life is also temporary. Unless you go back home, back to Godhead, there is no complete life. Therefore Kṛṣṇa comes and shows by His spiritual activities how to en-

joy real *ānanda*. He plays with the cowherd boys, He dances with the cowherd girls, He kills the demons—He performs so many activities. This is *ānanda*. You have read our Kṛṣṇa book? [*Kṛṣṇa: The Supreme Personality of Godhead*, Śrīla Prabhupāda’s summary study of the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.] Kṛṣṇa’s activities are described there in detail. We are trying to give people real knowledge from the *śāstra* [scriptures]. Now it’s up to them to take advantage of it. ☸





Our Hidden Treasure

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's parable of the astrologer and the poor man shows us how to uncover the ultimate treasure hidden within our hearts.

By Mohinī Rādhā Devī Dāsī

DO YOU KNOW that you are the heir to an immense fortune? The ultimate treasure lies buried within your heart, and you only need to know how to dig for it.

This surprising lesson is the essence of one of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's teachings to Sanātana Gosvāmī, as described in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā* 20.127–135). Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself, who appeared in Bengal about five hundred years ago to teach the science of devotion to Kṛṣṇa (Himself) by His own example. In other words, He behaved just like a devotee to teach others how to become devotees so that they could be delivered from material bondage and achieve unending spiritual bliss. In the course of His pastimes, Lord Caitanya imparted important teachings to His followers so that they could carry out His mission of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Sanātana Gosvāmī, one of the Lord's direct disciples, had the great fortune of hearing the following parable from the Lord Himself.

The Astrologer and the Poor Man

Once, an astrologer named Sarvajña came to the house of a poor man. Surprised at the man's wretched condition, he asked him why he was so unhappy and why he

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu taught that love for Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa lies asleep within our hearts and can be awakened by devotional practices.

languished in such poverty even though his wealthy father had left him a large treasure. Unfortunately, the man's father died in a foreign place and did not disclose the location of his assets; thus, the man suffered the distress of poverty because he was ignorant of his rightful inheritance. Only the astrologer, whose name means "the omniscient one," had the power to identify the hidden treasure and, just as important, the knowledge of the proper procedure to uncover it.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu explained to Sanātana Gosvāmī that the astrologer represents Vedic lit-

tus for spiritual inquiry, just as the poor man's impoverished condition led him to welcome the astrologer into his home. His curiosity to find out if his future promised any relief drove his inquiry. If we, too, become curious about our own suffering in the material world, then we can seek knowledge about our constitutional position, which is free from suffering. The revealed scriptures and liberated souls can help us understand that our true identity is spiritual, not material. We are not these temporary bodies, but eternal souls, and our ultimate happiness lies in understanding our eternal

right" (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.1.15, Purport). So our ultimate treasure is Lord Kṛṣṇa and pure devotional service to Him, but just knowing that does not help us; we not only need to identify our goal, but we must know how to reach it. Thus, the astrologer not only informed the poor man about his inheritance, but also provided a "map" to uncover it. He significantly cautioned against certain pathways that might appear promising but would ultimately lead to catastrophe. The poor man's treasure was buried under his house, but he would not reach it by digging on the southern, western, or northern sides of the house. Those locations would prove disastrous for the eager treasure-hunter, but a slight attempt made on the eastern side of the house would uncover the unimaginable reward.

Just as the astrologer's good news solved the poor man's problems, the Vedic scriptures can solve our greatest problems.

erature, which is meant to guide people toward the ultimate treasure of love of Godhead. Just as the astrologer's good news solved the poor man's problems, the Vedic scriptures can solve our greatest problem: our spiritual poverty, the cause of our suffering in the temporary material world. The Vedic scriptures (and their representatives, the pure devotees) advise us to take to the path of Kṛṣṇa consciousness so that we can re-establish our relationship with our spiritual father, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Just as the astrologer's words established the poor man's connection with his hidden treasure, the Vedic scriptures establish our connection with Kṛṣṇa, the supreme treasure.

For that connection to be established, we must first recognize our degraded condition, in which we are forced to suffer the "kicks of material nature," to use Prabhupāda's phrase. Lifetime after lifetime, we repeatedly accept different kinds of bodies and suffer birth, old age, disease, and death in the material world. Our desire to end our distressed condition serves as an impe-

loving relationship with the Supreme Soul, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

The man in the parable suffered due to his ignorance of his father and his father's property. Likewise, we are suffering due to our ignorance of our Supreme Father, Kṛṣṇa. As tiny spiritual particles, we are part of Kṛṣṇa, just as sparks are part of a fire. The Lord is *sat*, *cit*, and *ānanda*, eternally full of knowledge and bliss, and so are we; however, we have falsely identified ourselves with the temporary material nature and have forgotten who we really are. We are sons and daughters of the wealthiest person (wealth is one of His six primary opulences), but we have accepted repeated birth and death, pain and suffering, out of ignorance of our constitutional position as inheritors of Kṛṣṇa's unlimited blessings. But what is our actual hidden treasure, and how do we uncover it?

In *Bhagavad-gītā*, Kṛṣṇa declares that He is the ultimate goal (9.18) and the object of all religion and scriptures (15.15). Śrīla Prabhupāda tells us that pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness (knowledge of Kṛṣṇa and devotion to Him) is our "birth-

In His teachings to Sanātana Gosvāmī, Caitanya Mahāprabhu clearly explained the meaning of these injunctions to emphasize their importance. The astrologer told the poor man that the southern (*dakṣiṇa*) side of the house was full of angry wasps and drones. In Bengali, the language in which Caitanya Mahāprabhu was speaking, the word *dakṣiṇa* is used to denote "south" as well as the practice of giving charity to priests after performing religious rituals. In the context of the parable, the southern side represents ritualistic performances with the expectation of material benefits. This means that mere attachment to ritualistic procedures cannot yield the ultimate spiritual goal. If we try to understand the Absolute Truth by the method of fruitive activity (*karma-kāṇḍa*), we will be figuratively bitten by poisonous insects and will not be able to dig for the ultimate treasure.

The bites of poisonous insects represent the suffering brought on by fruitive activities. When we follow the path of fruitive activities, we are subject to the law of karma, which, simply put, means that every action causes some kind of reaction.

South: Karma-Kāṇḍa

When we commit sins, we are liable to be punished. The stings of wasps and drones aptly represent those punishments. But even if we perform pious activities and earn relatively pleasant karmic results (such as promotion to higher planets for greater enjoyment and longevity), we are still not freed of materialistic desires, and we will be forced to suffer material existence birth after birth. Our ultimate treasure will remain unreachable.

West: Jñāna-kāṇḍa

The astrologer also cautioned the man against digging on the western side of the house, where his hands would not even touch the treasure because ghosts fiercely guarded it. Ghosts represent mental disturbances that bewilder our concentration and shake our resolve. The western side of the house represents *jñāna-kāṇḍa*, philosophical speculation, which not only fails to grant the ultimate treasure, but causes us to deviate from its pursuit. No amount of scholarly research can help us understand Kṛṣṇa, because He is transcendental to all mundane knowledge. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, Śrīla Prabhupāda's spiritual master, once lamented, "The self-luminous path of pure devotion is completely covered by millions of thorns in the shape of foolish arguments and wordy wrangling." (Lecture in Vrindavan, 1928) Here, these "foolish arguments" and "wordy wrangling" take the shape of ghosts who eclipse the real treasure of pure devotional service.

North: Impersonal Yoga

The astrologer also warned the poor man that a big black serpent would devour him if he dug on the northern side. Perhaps the most dangerous of all, this direction represents impersonal mystic meditation or yoga. The gaping mouth of the black snake of impersonalism sits like a trap, ready to swallow anyone who treads too closely. The philosophy of impersonalism imagines God

to be a formless void and proposes that anyone can become God by merging into Him. This false logic runs directly opposite the principle of devotional service, which is based on loving reciprocation between the Lord and His devotees. Without such a reciprocal relationship, there can be no exchange of love, nor any bliss. Impersonalism, which is actually atheism thinly disguised as spiritual practice, results in spiritual suicide and is the greatest enemy to devotional service.

East: The Treasure

Real yoga means to link ourselves with the Supreme Lord, not to merge into His existence; it means to establish an eternal link of reciprocal love between the Lord and His devotee. Thus, the astrologer finally revealed the true path to success: "If you dig up a small quantity of dirt on the eastern side, your hands will immediately touch the pot of treasure." The eastern side represents *bhakti-yoga*, the path of devotional service, whereby a slight effort will yield the ultimate treasure. Śrīla Prabhupāda confirms, "It is only the eastern side, devotional service, that enables one to attain life's real goal . . . devotional service to Kṛṣṇa is the real treasure house for the living entity." As Kṛṣṇa declares in *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.55), one can understand Him as He is, and thereby become eligible to enter His spiritual abode, only through devotional service.

After finishing the parable, Caitanya Mahāprabhu quoted from the Eleventh Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.14.20–21), in which Kṛṣṇa tells His friend Uddhava about the supremacy of devotional service:

My dear Uddhava, neither through *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* [the mystic yoga system to control the senses], nor through impersonal monism or an analytical study of the Absolute Truth, nor through study of the *Vedas*, nor through austerities, charity, or acceptance of *sannyāsa* can one satisfy Me as much as by

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developing unalloyed devotional service unto Me. Being very dear to the devotees and *sādhus*, I am attained through unflinching devotional service. This *bhakti-yoga* system, which gradually increases attachment for Me, purifies even a human being born among the dog-eaters. That is to say, everyone can be elevated to the spiritual platform by the process of *bhakti-yoga*.

Thus the Lord Himself (in the forms of both Kṛṣṇa and Caitanya Mahāprabhu) glorifies pure devotional service as the only means to attain the Supreme Lord. Such devotional service must be unalloyed

ignorance just as clouds cover the brilliant sun. Pure devotional service can drive away those clouds and revive our dormant love of God with the sunlight of transcendental knowledge. The heart being the “house” for the soul, the poor man’s treasure buried beneath his house corresponds to the dormant love of God buried in our hearts. As Caitanya Mahāprabhu explains: *nitya-siddha kṛṣṇa prema*, “Pure love for Kṛṣṇa is eternally established in the hearts of the living entities.” (Cc. *Madhya*, 22.107) We are, almost literally, sitting on top of our hidden treasure. But why can’t we perceive it?

Materialistic desires are just like dirt that fills our heart and buries our ultimate treasure beneath its filthy clutter.

and unflinching, or unmixed and unending. Our goal is not material wealth, or even liberation from material existence, but the spiritual bliss of pure devotional service (see Cc. *Madhya* 20.142). As the pure devotee Prahlaḍa Mahārāja taught his friends, “The Lord is pleased only if one has unflinching, unalloyed devotion to Him. Without sincere devotional service, everything is simply a show.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.7.52)

Pure devotional service is not only the means to our ultimate goal, but is itself the greatest treasure. On the absolute platform, there is no difference between loving service to Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa Himself. As Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu explains, “In the Vedic literatures, Kṛṣṇa is the central point of attraction, and His service is our activity. To attain the platform of love of Kṛṣṇa is life’s ultimate goal. Therefore Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa’s service, and love of Kṛṣṇa are the three great riches of life.” (Cc. *Madhya* 20.143)

Pure love of Godhead is the natural propensity of every living entity, but it becomes covered by

After millions of lifetimes in different species in the material world, our identification with matter has blinded us not only to the location of our treasure, but also to its very existence. Materialistic desires—chiefly, the desire to enjoy independently of Kṛṣṇa, the supreme enjoyer—are just like dirt that fills our heart and buries our ultimate treasure beneath its filthy clutter. When we practice devotional service under the guidance of a bona fide spiritual master, our hearts are cleansed of the “dirt” of material contamination and our dormant love of God reawakens.

The Most Effective Bhakti Practices

Mahāprabhu’s parable shows us that simply by the process of devotional service, we can rediscover the secret treasure that has been concealed for so long. In Kali-yuga, the current age of quarrel and hypocrisy (the last and most degraded of the four ages), the only means to attain—or revive—our pure love of God is through the chanting of

His holy names: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Of the nine chief processes of devotional service mentioned in the scriptures, *śravaṇam* and *kīrtanam*, or hearing and chanting, are the most effective in this age.

As Caitanya Mahāprabhu promises in the first line of His *Śikṣā-ṣṭaka* (eight teachings glorifying the chanting of the Lord’s holy names), “The chanting of the Lord’s holy names cleanses the mirror of the heart of all the dust accumulated for years together and thus extinguishes the blazing fire of conditional life, of repeated birth and death.” By chanting the Lord’s holy names, which are identical to Him, we can cleanse the mirror of our heart and finally perceive our true identities as His eternal loving servants. Thus, we can uncover our natural property: our hidden treasure, pure love of God.

We can attain that ultimate treasure only by the mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He descended to this world because He wanted to relish the sweetness of devotional service to Kṛṣṇa (Himself), and so He acted as Kṛṣṇa’s perfect devotee to show all of us how to achieve the ultimate goal of life. He is ready to give us the greatest treasure, because He is its very source.

As *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya* 2.81) proclaims, Lord Caitanya “is a wealthy capitalist possessing the touchstone of love of God. Not considering whether one is a proper or improper recipient, He gives His treasure to anyone and everyone. Thus He is the most munificent.” Thus, by the mercy of the Lord and His pure devotees, we can also attain the ultimate fortune of pure, loving devotion to Kṛṣṇa. Then, like the astrologer, we can tell everyone else how to find their hidden treasure. 🌸

Mohinī Rādhā Devī Dāsī, a disciple of His Holiness Gopāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami, lives in India with her husband, Nārada Ṛṣi Dāsa.

CALENDAR

This calendar is calculated for Mayapur, West Bengal, India. The dates, derived from a lunar calendar, may vary by one day for other locations. For the exact dates for your area, go to www.krishnadays.com.

Because the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement comes in disciplic line from Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the calendar includes not only dates relevant to all followers of the Vedic tradition but also dates relating to Lord Caitanya's associates and prominent spiritual masters in His disciplic succession.

April 19–May 17 (Month of Madhusūdana)

MAY

3—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Gadādhara Paṇḍita, one of Lord Caitanya's principal associates.

6—Beginning of Candana Yātrā, the festival of anointing the temple deity with sandalwood pulp for twenty-one days.

12—Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Sītā Devī, the consort of Lord Rāmacandra. Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Jāhnavā Devī, the consort of Lord Nityānanda Prabhu. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Madhu Paṇḍita, a great devotee of Lord Caitanya.

14—**Trispr̥ṣā Mahā-Dvādaśī**
Fasting from grains and beans for Mohinī Ekādaśī.

15—Rukmiṇī Dvādaśī, the appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Rukmiṇī Devī, the consort of Lord Kṛṣṇa as Dvārakādhīśa, the Lord of Dvārakā. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Jayānanda Prabhu, a dedicated disciple of Śrīla Prabhu-pāda who helped him bring the Rathayātrā festival to the Western world.

16—Nṛsimha Caturdaśī, appearance anniversary of Lord Nṛsimhadeva, Lord Kṛṣṇa's half-man, half-lion incarnation. Fasting till dusk, followed by feasting.

17—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, a follower of the six Gosvāmīs. Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī, the spiritual master of Lord Caitanya's spiritual master (Īśvara Purī).

Painting by Rāmadāsa Abhirāma Dāsa



Lord Nṛsimhadeva

May 18–June 15 (Month of Trivikrama)

22—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Rāmānanda Rāya, an intimate associate of Lord Caitanya.

28—**Aparā Ekādaśī**
Fasting from grains and beans.

29—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Vṇḍāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura, the author of *Śrī Caitanya-Bhāgavata*, a biography on Lord Caitanya.

JUNE

11—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, a prominent spiritual master in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava

sampradāya (disciplic succession), and the author of *Govinda-bhāṣya*, an important commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra*. Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Gaṅgāmātā Gosvāmīnī, a prominent woman spiritual master in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*.

12—**Pāṇḍava Nirjalā Ekādaśī**
Fasting from grains and beans.

June 16–July 15 (Month of Vāmana)

16—Disappearance of Śyāmānanda Paṇḍita, one of the principal followers of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṇḍāvana.

26—Disappearance anniversary of Śrī Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, one of the principal associates of Lord Caitanya.

27—**Yoginī Ekādaśī**
Fasting from grains and beans.

JULY

1—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Gadādhara Paṇḍita, one of the principal associates of Lord Caitanya. Also, disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Fasting till noon, then feasting.

2—Guṇḍicā-mārjana: festival of cleansing the Guṇḍicha temple in Jagannatha Puri, India.

3—Lord Jagannātha's Rathayātrā in Jagannatha Puri. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara and Śrīla Śivānanda Sena, intimate associates of Lord Caitanya.

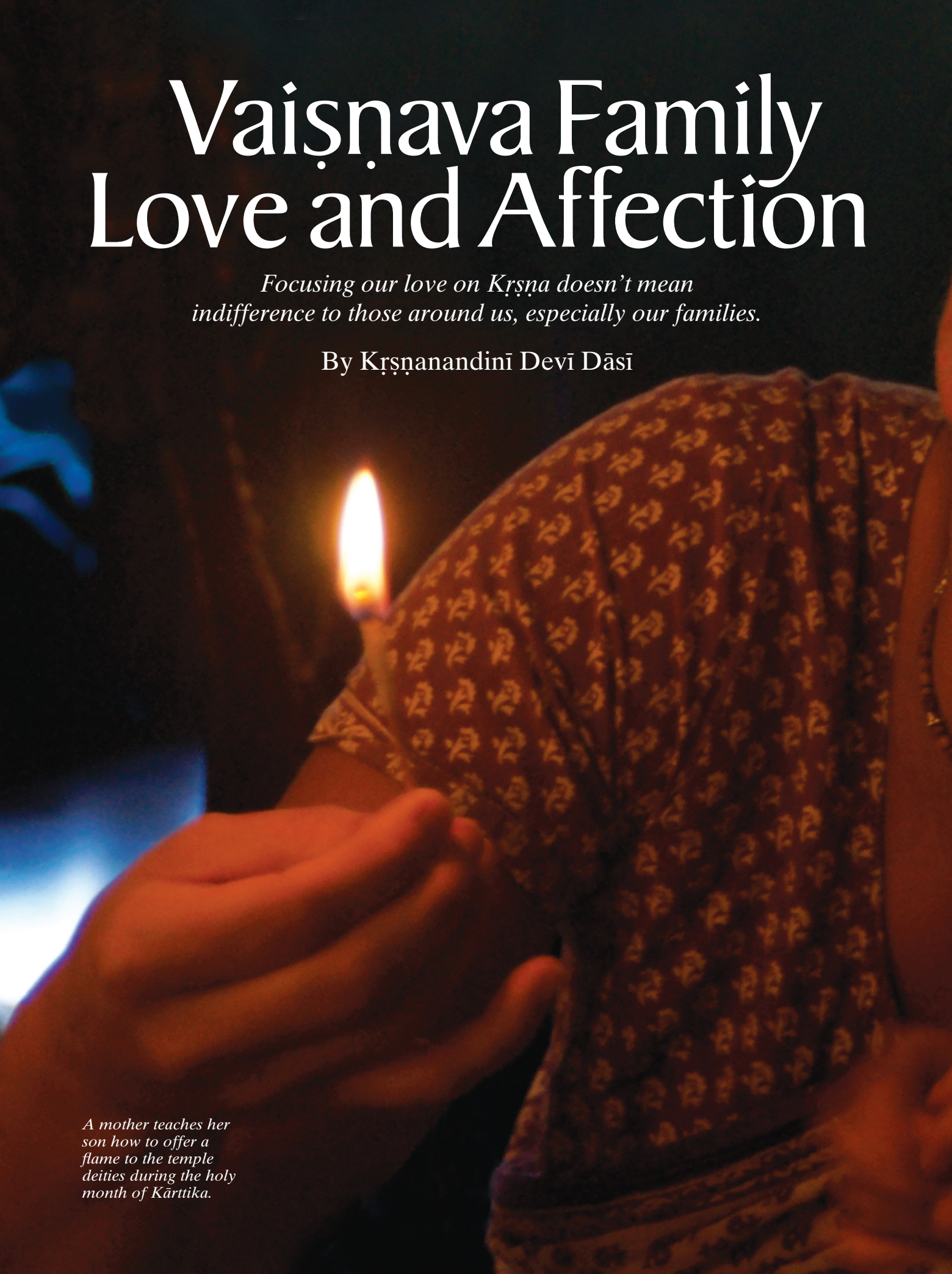
11—**Śayanā Ekādaśī**
Fasting from grains and beans.

Vaiṣṇava Family Love and Affection

*Focusing our love on Kṛṣṇa doesn't mean
indifference to those around us, especially our families.*

By Kṛṣṇanandinī Devī Dāsī

*A mother teaches her
son how to offer a
flame to the temple
deities during the holy
month of Kārtika.*





PICTURE THIS: Śrīmatī Devī comes home from school one afternoon so quietly that her mother, Sudevī, senses a problem.

“Śrīmatī,” she calls, “are you okay? How was your day?”

When she doesn’t hear a response, Sudevī goes to the ten-year-old’s bedroom, takes one glance at her daughter’s tearful face, and hugs her.

“Mom, today some of the kids in my class said I was crazy because I don’t eat meat. One girl put a meat sandwich in my face. I pushed her away from me, and the teacher gave me a detention.”

Sudevī comforts her daughter, and they talk a little about Kṛṣṇa, about animals, about how all life is sacred, and about how sometimes, because of ignorance, people say and do mean things. Mostly though, she uses this time to show affection and to nurture her daughter and the stand she has taken to see the life in animals as sacred.

Imagine a new devotee, Bhakta Ted, being shaken by an experience with the police on his way to the temple. Bhakta Ted had worn his dhoti while in a park chanting on his beads and was intimidated by some passers-by. When a police officer noticed the incident, he interrogated Bhakta Ted for fifteen minutes and laughed off the fact that some park visitors had harassed him.

“If I saw a man dressed in a skirt like that,” the policeman said, “I might tease him too.”

Another of the newer devotees in the temple brushes off the police incident.

“You’ll be all right,” he says. “That’s just a part of your karma. It’s just *māyā*.”

Another devotee, sensing how much the disturbance has affected Bhakta Ted, takes time to sit with him, listen carefully to his concerns, and reassure him that despite the inevitable difficulties of the material world, Kṛṣṇa gives His devotees encouragement and fortitude. This will pass, he tells Bhakta Ted, and asks if there is anything more he can do to help him.

If we carefully examine people everywhere, we will find that everyone needs emotional support. We are living, sentient beings, and our desires for affiliation, friendship, affection, and appreciation are natural and spiritual. We have

Photo by Yamarāja Dāsa

these desires because Lord Kṛṣṇa, the original person from whom all living characteristics come, exhibits them Himself.

Divine Personalities Show Us the Way

Hanumān, a powerful devotee, gently comforted Sitā in her distress. He assured her that her husband, Lord Rāmacandra, would soon arrange her deliverance, and he gave her Rāma's ring as a sign of His loyalty. Because Hanumān showed such concern and because of his extraordinary mood of loving service to the Lord and His devotees, Lord Rāma awarded him with a loving embrace and eternal devotion to Him.

The deep, heartfelt language of exchanges between devotees in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* has always heartened me. Their interactions are full of sweetness, humility, and concern. Generally, no matter what the problems, the devotees in these scriptures take time to greet each other with humble appreciation and loving feelings. In fact, to not be happy to see a devotee is considered an offense. We should remember that our children, our spouses, our parents, even persons at the temple who may annoy us, are dev-

otees, parts of Kṛṣṇa. Remembering this will help us treat them with tender loving care.

The Grihastha Vision Team is a group of devotees, many of them disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda, who counsel and educate devotees about marriage and family. They have committed themselves to providing service and support to devotees in the *grhastha āśrama* (married life). This team, in collaboration with Vaisnava Training and Education, has scrutinized Śrīla Prabhupāda's books and his instructions and identified twelve fundamental principles and values of healthy *grhastha* life. One of these is "Family Love and Affection." A stable emotional background, in which all family or community members feel wanted and appreciated, is essential for the personal and spiritual growth of adults and children.

Proper Understanding of Attachment and Detachment In Family Life

Sometimes devotees, especially in the neophyte stage, misunderstand the meaning of "detachment" and "attachment." We learn early on that we must become attached to Kṛṣṇa and detached from everything in the material world, and we may erroneously conclude that

showing affection or attachment to others is *māyā*, or material. Since even devotees are in material bodies, we might conclude that warm, loving interactions with other devotees is unnecessary or even an impediment to our spiritual growth. However, such thinking is mistaken. Śrīla Prabhupāda explains in *Teachings of Queen Kuntī*, Chapter 25, "[Kuntī's] affection for the Pāṇḍavas and the Vṛṣṇis is not out of the range of devotional service, because the service of the Lord and the service of the devotees are identical."

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the Supreme Lord, has declared in the *Caitanya-bhāgavata* (*Madhya* 19.210), "The living entities who live in numberless universes are all My servants. Therefore, any living entity that harms another living entity will perish." When we recognize that all things, all people, and all living beings belong to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, we will see that we have nothing to renounce and nothing to be detached from. We should be detached from the material understanding. That is, we should not be overly attached to bodies and material activities that will cause us to forget our service to the Lord.

How We Are All Connected

The living entity is not the body, and therefore we should realize that our connection to everyone is through the Supersoul in the heart of each living being. Then we will aspire to use everything in His service and treat all with loving care. Śrīla Prabhupāda exemplified this understanding in all of his interactions with everyone. Whether famous or not, whether a dignitary or a child, he treated each person with a sincere, heartfelt caring.

Another challenge to loving relationships in devotee families is that we sometimes forget that our husband, wife, or child is a devotee and we become careless, neglectful, or disrespectful in our dealings with them. As the saying goes, "Familiarity breeds contempt." We should

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be careful not to fall prey to this pitfall. Praying to truly embody the instruction given to us by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu—to be humbler than grass and more tolerant than a tree—we should try hard to be especially humble and tolerant in our dealings with our family members. In such a mood we will stay connected with Kṛṣṇa, and He will guide us from within in how to consistently show love and affection to our family members and others. Devotees sometimes treat devotees outside of their families with respect, while being careless in how they treat the family members who live with them.

Expressing Loving Sentiments

How should we express our love to our family members? About five hundred years ago, the saint and scholar Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī delineated “the six symptoms of love shared by one devotee and another”: (1) giving charity to the devotees, (2) accepting from the devotees whatever they may offer in return, (3) opening one’s mind to the devotees, (4) inquiring from them about the confidential service of the Lord, (5) honoring *prasādam*, or spiritual food, given by the devotees, and (6) feeding the devotees with *prasādam*. Mutuality and reciprocation are key in these loving exchanges. In the big family I grew up in, we had an uncle who was the soul of generosity, always giving gifts or doing favors for his relatives. Yet it was difficult for him to accept gifts and services. Eventually these one-sided exchanges took their toll on his relationships, so much so that he began to think of himself as the Benevolent One or Great Benefactor, dispensing money, gifts, and other resources to others who then always looked to him as the supplier. Over time, resentment built up on both sides. When he was unable or unwilling to give, family members neglected him and he resented their attitudes. So it is very important that loving exchanges be reciprocated. Also, something so simple (but often

challenging) as really, genuinely, listening respectfully to your child or your spouse or other devotees, with sympathy and without being anxious to get your own words in, can be a great act of love and affection.

Rūpa Gosvāmī defined real love for Kṛṣṇa as favorable devotional service to Him. This is a great definition to apply to love between devotees as well because it combines the two fundamental parts of love: devotion (attitude) and service (action). The word *love*, which can be a noun or a verb, indicates both a state of being and action.

Rūpa Gosvāmī also lists the qualities necessary to advance spiri-

you, don’t take it for granted. Take the time to express your gratitude. Little thoughtful comments can significantly increase the level of satisfaction in your relationships. The French philosopher Blaise Pascal said, “Little things console us because little things afflict us.” So, even little things, like appreciating a good meal, can strengthen a relationship. Take inventory and ask yourself when was the last time you truly listened to your spouse or other family member, gave him or her a gift, or prepared some *prasādam* as a surprise?

In the material world, relationships are generally based on lust

We should actively seek out the association of other families and couples serious about spiritual life.

tually, and we can apply these to healthy family life in Kṛṣṇa consciousness as well: patience, enthusiasm, firm conviction (that Lord Kṛṣṇa wants healthy family life), acting according to regulative principles, straightforward dealings (honesty, integrity), and association with likeminded souls—we should actively seek out the association of other families and couples serious about spiritual life.

Doing Spiritual Activities Together Enhances Family Life

Kṛṣṇa conscious family members should read and discuss scripture together, have regular *kīrtanas* together, share *prasādam*, serve the Deity in their homes, and pray for sincere and steady connection to Lord Kṛṣṇa and each other.

Think about it: How often have you sat down to a good meal prepared by one of your family or friends and neglected to really appreciate the cook for his or her efforts? When a good, tasty, nutritious *prasādam* meal is offered to

and illusion and are a perverted reflection of the loving exchanges in the eternal reality. In the spiritual world, however, deeply loving, reciprocal relationships are the normal and natural existence. There, devotees compete to serve the Lord and each other. When we sincerely chant the holy names of Kṛṣṇa, appreciate the association of saintly people, and otherwise engage in devotional service, we can truly share real spiritual love and affection with others even while apparently in the material environment. ❁

Kṛṣṇanandini Devī Dāsī, a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda, is a Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE), a licensed minister of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the state of Ohio, president of ISKCON’s Grihastha Vision Team, and co-director, along with her husband, Tariq Saleem Ziyad, of the Dasi-Ziyad Family Institute. She and her husband have written many articles and conducted many workshops on family, marriage, and relationships. She resides with her family in Cleveland, Ohio.

In your own

What can we do to reciprocate with Śrīla Prabhupāda for what he has given us?

Śrīla Prabhupāda taught us how to connect to Śrī Kṛṣṇa

by calling out His name in *japa*, and we should reciprocate by being eager to connect to Kṛṣṇa by our most sincere practice of *japa*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda gave us absolute knowledge in his books, and we should reciprocate by seriously studying his books.

Prabhupāda asked us to distribute his books, and we should reciprocate by enthusiastically using every opportunity to distribute his books.

Prabhupāda painstakingly preached the glory of love of Godhead, and we should reciprocate by glorifying Śrīla Prabhupāda while talking about love of Godhead.

Śrīla Prabhupāda is our main teacher, and we should reciprocate by always remembering him as our primeval spiritual master.

Śrīla Prabhupāda built a univer-

sal shelter called ISKCON, and we should reciprocate by our personal behavior, using all our faculties to strengthen Prabhupāda's ISKCON.

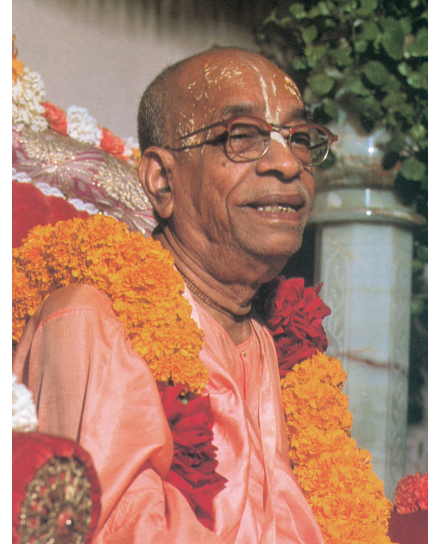
Prabhupāda told us that we could relate to Kṛṣṇa through His pure devotee, so let us reciprocate by always offering our respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of our dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, Lord Kṛṣṇa's pure devotee.

Govinda-nandinī Devī Dāsī
New Jersey

It is impossible to fully reciprocate

with such an exalted pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa as Śrīla Prabhupāda for what he has given us. If we follow his instructions to the point, then we will have reciprocated with him to some extent in a very small, token way.

As a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa, Śrīla Prabhupāda was full of compassion for the fallen conditioned souls. He wanted us to get out from material entanglement by bringing Kṛṣṇa into our lives by strictly following the four regulative principles and engaging ourselves in devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. To that end, as an *ācārya* Śrīla Prabhupāda demonstrated how one is supposed to lead a saintly life of simple living and high thinking. He stressed the importance of distributing his books and



preaching the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to anyone and everyone who was receptive, regardless of cast, creed, religious faith, ethnicity, or barriers of any sorts. Therefore as a token of reciprocation for his sacrifice, we should try our level best to follow his instructions. That will please Śrīla Prabhupāda the most. Vaikuṇṭheśwar Bālāji Dāsa (V. Mistry) Austin, Texas

We must unceasingly align our hearts

with Kṛṣṇa, while keeping in our consciousness the debt of gratitude we owe always to our beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda.

David Garvin
Sugar Land, Texas

When I think of Śrīla Prabhupāda, two things first come to mind:

his love for humankind and concern for the state of humanity, and his passion for book distribution and spreading knowledge of Kṛṣṇa.

We can never truly properly reciprocate with Śrīla Prabhupāda.



words . . .



Pentip photo: Andrea Leone | Agency: Dreamstime.com

The gift he has given us is precious beyond words, and a few rounds of *japa* or words of praise seem poor in comparison.

But I think we can go some way by being good devotees, by chanting, by loving Kṛṣṇa, by serving devotees, and by distributing books and knowledge of Kṛṣṇa every chance we get.

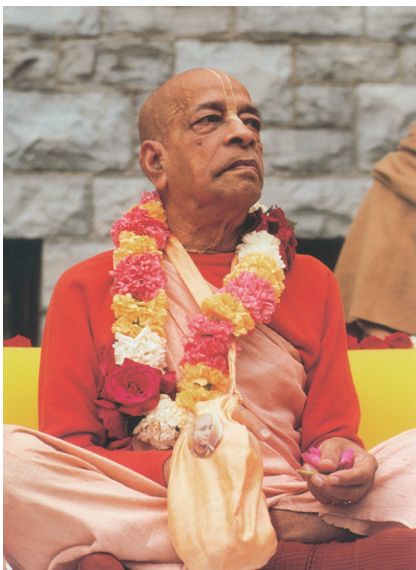
If we bring even one person to Kṛṣṇa, then we have helped to carry out the wishes of our wonderful spiritual leader. This I think is the best thanks we as humble ignorant souls can offer.

Anna Mace
Maidenhead, Berkshire, UK

It is impossible to repay Śrīla Prabhupāda

for what he has given us, and is still giving us, through his books. But whatever little we can do to please Śrīla Prabhupāda will be to our benefit. The best thing that can be done to please Śrīla Prabhupāda is to try to preach and distribute his books and words to whomever we meet.

All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda!
Chirag Dangarwala
Mount Prospect, Illinois



The reciprocation process is simple:

All we have to do to lovingly reciprocate with Śrīla Prabhupāda is follow the instructions and teachings he has laid out for us. Śrīla Prabhupāda repeatedly stressed that he would be pleased if we incorporate Kṛṣṇa consciousness into our daily lives and depend on Kṛṣṇa for our subsistence. Although collectively we can never repay Prabhupāda for the eternal gift he has given us, what we can do to honor Śrīla Prabhupāda is read his spiritually enlivening books, visit the temples he established, make spiritual friends with his disciples and devotees, and so forth. If we repeatedly perform these activities, we will find that we will achieve outstanding realizations, as well as Śrīla Prabhupāda's reciprocation with us.

And here's the best part: In the end, once we quit our bodies, these spiritual activities will transfer us to the eternal spiritual world, where we will live happily with Śrīla Prabhupāda and Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, if we follow Śrīla Prabhupāda's spiritual teachings, not only will we reciprocate with and please him, but we will also get a once-in-a-lifetime chance to meet him up in the spiritual world, Vṛndāvana.

Mohit Kapoor (age 13)
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Lord Caitanya's movement was inaugurated when He took chanting

the *mahā-mantra* to the streets as a method for promulgating Kṛṣṇa con-

sciousness. A Vaiṣṇava is recognized through preaching. Śrīla Prabhupāda immediately put his disciples on this high platform of preacher by commissioning them to routinely perform congregational public chanting. *Harināma-saṅkīrtana* creates a very potent magical backdrop atmosphere for book distribution also.

A familiar term in ISKCON's heyday was "fired-up." We can ignite



the visibility and potency of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement simply by all followers increasing their sacrifice of public chanting and in doing so reciprocate with Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Rūpacandra Dāsi
Bonners Ferry, Idaho 🌸

HERE'S THE NEXT QUESTION:

Choose a verse from
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam
and explain why it
inspires you.

Go to Krishna.com/in-your-own-words and let us know. Please keep your answer to under 150 words. Replies will appear in the Sep/Oct 2011 issue. Deadline for submissions is July 1.

In VRINDAVAN

They came for yoga—and discovered bhakti.

INDIA IS KNOWN as *punya bhūmi*, “the land of spiritual merit,” because of its many holy places. Among them, Vrindavan, the land of Kṛṣṇa in the Mathura district of Uttar Pradesh, is the holiest.

When God descends, so does His eternal abode. Lord Kṛṣṇa descends with Vrindavan, just as Lord Rāma descends with Ayodhya. These divine abodes are known as *dhāmas*.

Vrindavan is the sacred playground of Kṛṣṇa, where He performed His childhood pastimes some five thousand years ago, and His presence is felt here more than anywhere else. When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu visited Vrindavan in CE 1523, He disclosed many of the sites of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes.

The glories of Vrindavan *dhāma* are described in the Vedic scriptures. For advancement in spiritual life, living or spending time in the *dhāma* is beneficial because one accumulates spiritual merit there. Vrindavan (*vr̥ndā-vana*) translates as “the forest of Vṛndā,” a cowherd-girl associate of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa who assumes the form of the sacred Tulasi plant (also known as “holy basil”). The greater Vrindavan area is known as Vraja.

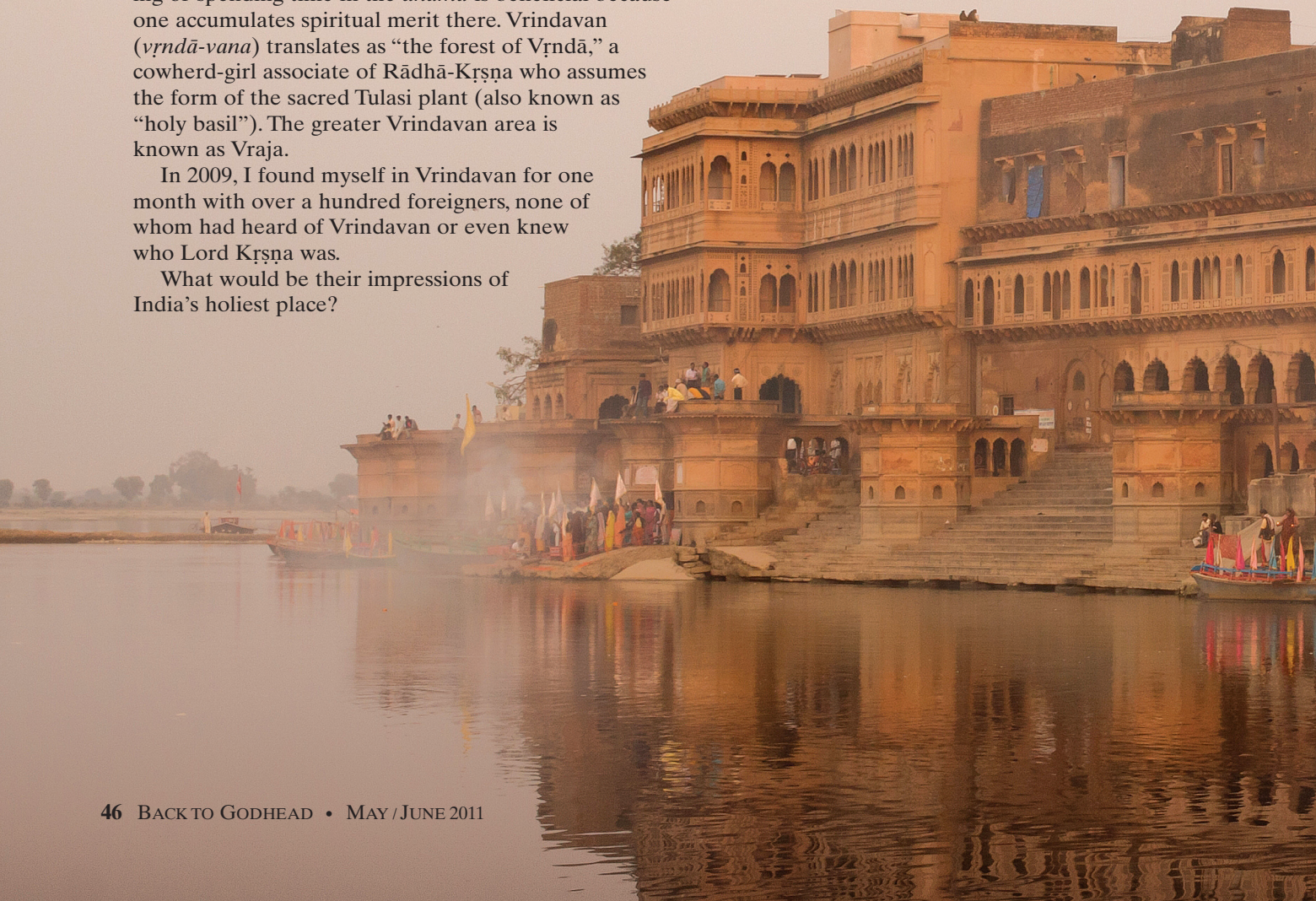
In 2009, I found myself in Vrindavan for one month with over a hundred foreigners, none of whom had heard of Vrindavan or even knew who Lord Kṛṣṇa was.

What would be their impressions of India’s holiest place?

Yoga in the Dhāma

I had been interested in yoga for a few years, so when I heard of a one-month yoga course being held in Vrindavan, I took up the opportunity.

Since it was being held in Vrindavan *dhāma*, I expected it would be attended mostly by Kṛṣṇa devotees. I was surprised that the attendees I met, mostly from the UK, the USA, Germany, France, Japan, and Argentina, had never heard of Vrindavan and hence were totally oblivious of its significance. They had just ended up in the most auspicious place by chance (or, in fact, by Kṛṣṇa’s mercy) while looking for a yoga course. I wondered what pious activities they must have done in previous lives to be brought to Vrindavan without



AN With a Hundred Foreigners

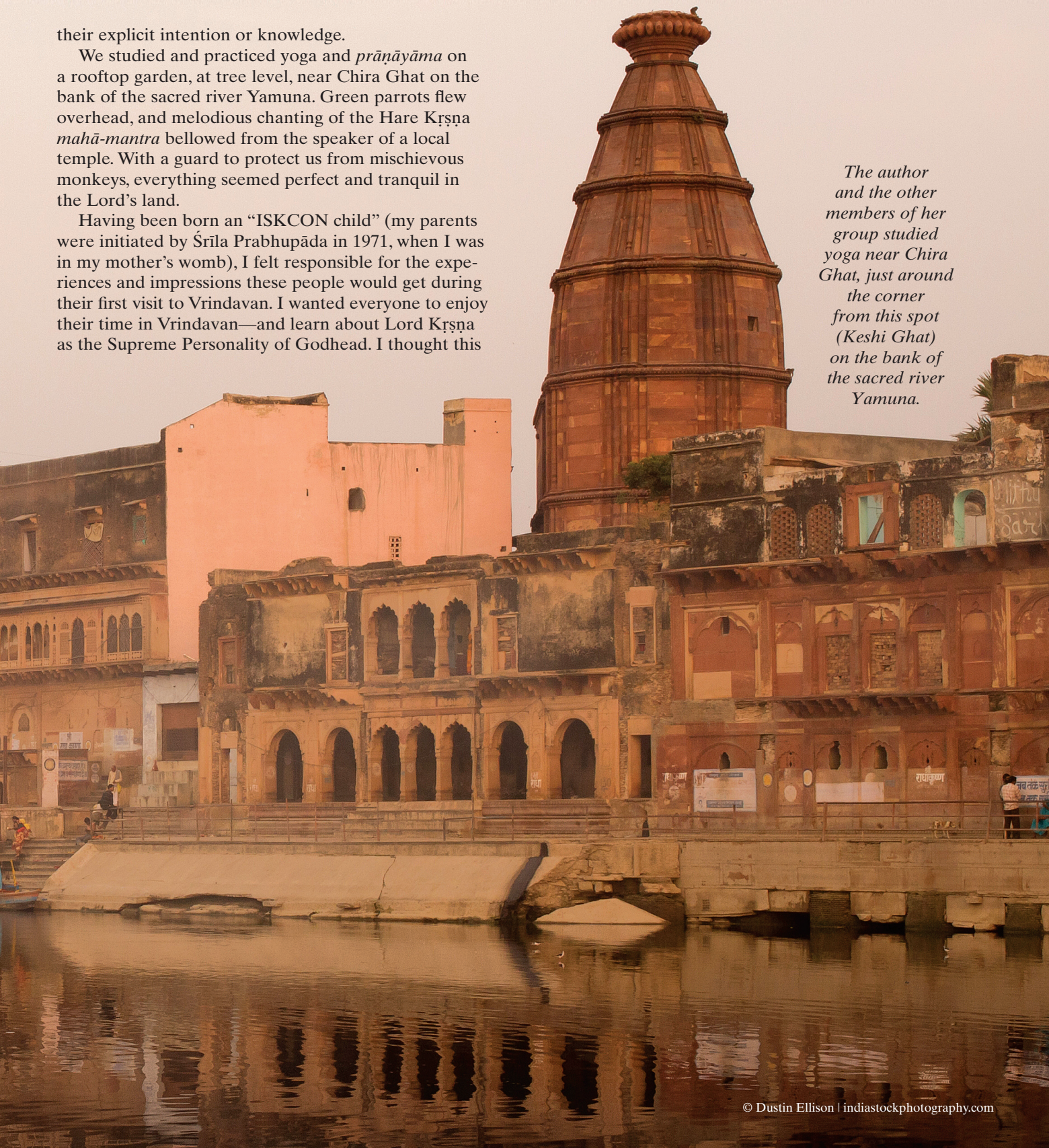
By Meera Khurana

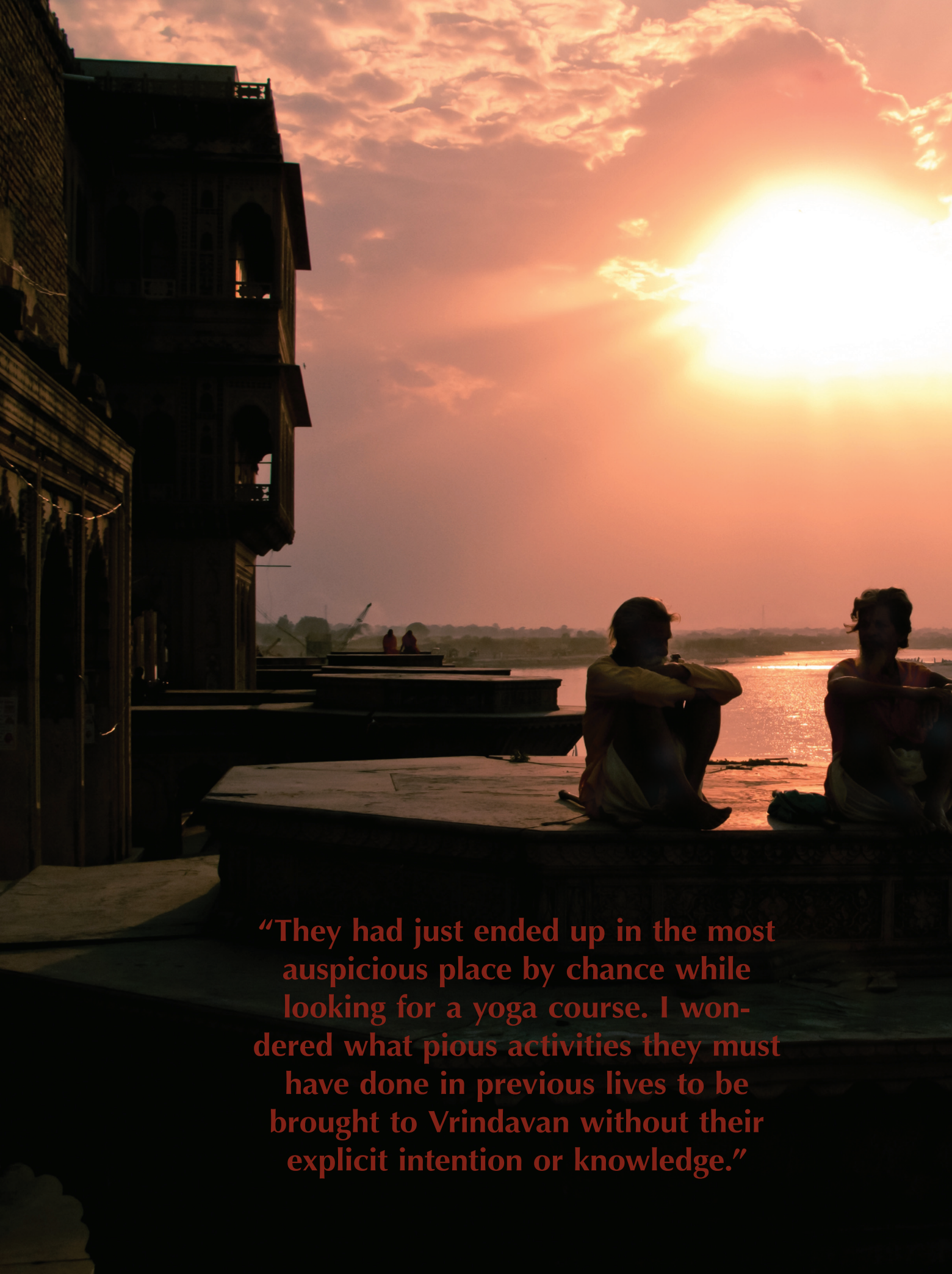
their explicit intention or knowledge.

We studied and practiced yoga and *prāṇāyāma* on a rooftop garden, at tree level, near Chira Ghat on the bank of the sacred river Yamuna. Green parrots flew overhead, and melodious chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* bellowed from the speaker of a local temple. With a guard to protect us from mischievous monkeys, everything seemed perfect and tranquil in the Lord's land.

Having been born an "ISKCON child" (my parents were initiated by Śrīla Prabhupāda in 1971, when I was in my mother's womb), I felt responsible for the experiences and impressions these people would get during their first visit to Vrindavan. I wanted everyone to enjoy their time in Vrindavan—and learn about Lord Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. I thought this

The author and the other members of her group studied yoga near Chira Ghat, just around the corner from this spot (Keshi Ghat) on the bank of the sacred river Yamuna.





“They had just ended up in the most auspicious place by chance while looking for a yoga course. I wondered what pious activities they must have done in previous lives to be brought to Vrindavan without their explicit intention or knowledge.”



*At Keshi Ghat, pilgrims sit
beside the Yamuna at sunset.*

© Adam O'Hara | Indiasstockphotography.com

to be an excellent opportunity to tell people about Kṛṣṇa. After all, what better topic is there, especially in Kṛṣṇa's land?

Many of the people had never sat on the floor to eat before, had never eaten with their fingers or even had a pure vegetarian meal before. For many it was their first trip to India. Despite this, the effect that Vrindavan had on many of the yoga students was encouraging and exceeded my expectations.

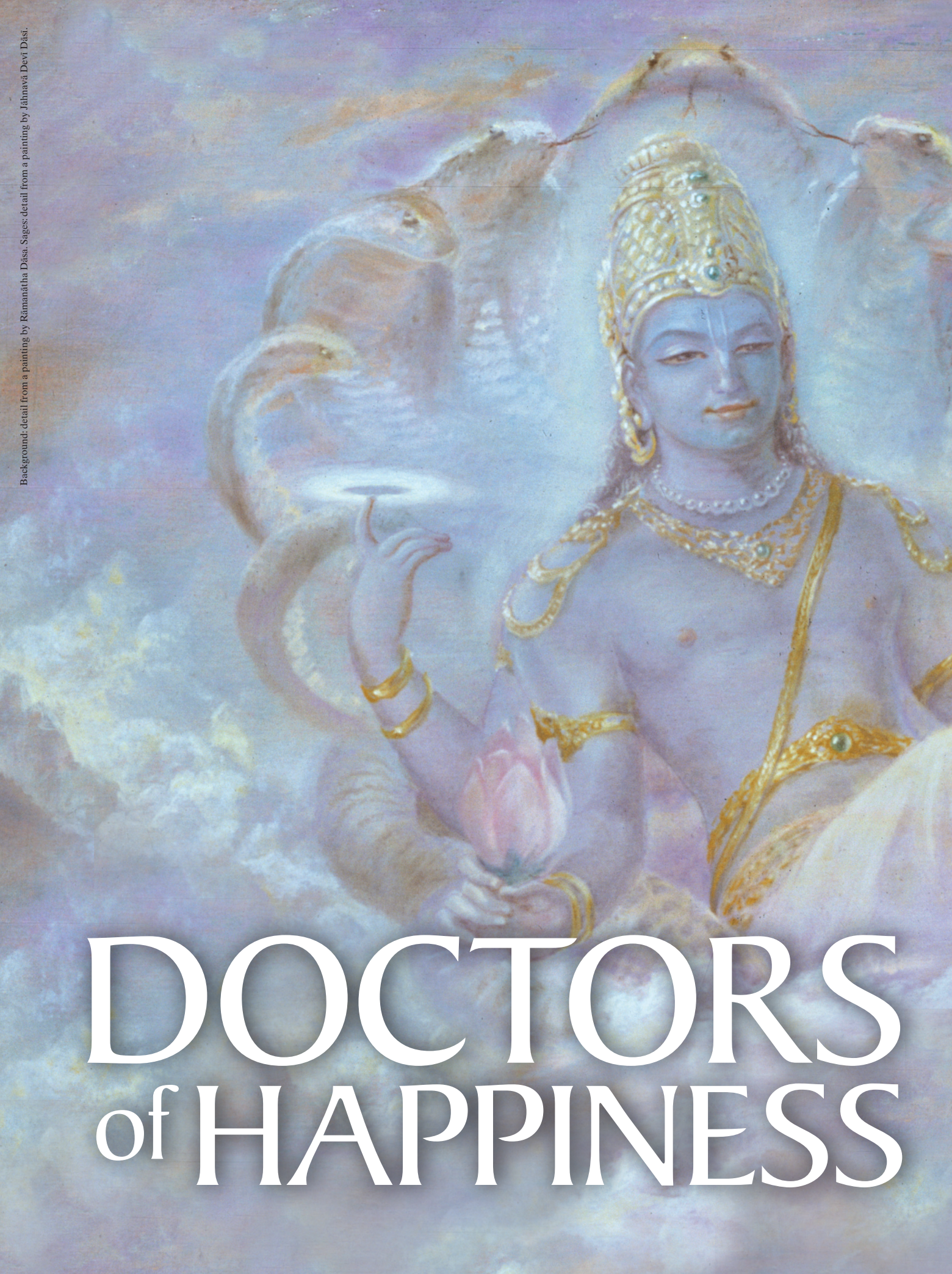
Experiencing Vrindavan

We had one day a week off from classes. I would take some of the students on Vrindavan *parikramā* (circumambulation) and visit ISKCON's Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Temple en route.

I was conscious of what they thought when we bowed down to place our foreheads in the dust of the holy land (pigs had just been roaming around in the same area), and how they would react to their first experience at an ISKCON temple. They had never heard such chanting before or even seen deities.

During the *parikramās*, I spoke to them about Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings and his mercy upon us for introducing Vrindavan to the world. They asked philosophical questions, and we had interesting discussions, including comparisons between Kṛṣṇa consciousness and other major world religions. They were surprised to see how comfortable they felt with the philosophy and how it made logical sense to them. For example, they appreciated the simple point that since the cow is like a mother and we drink her milk, we do not eat or harm her. The law of *karma* also seemed commonsense to them.

The most wonderful thing was how very soon they loved Vrindavan. They mentioned how they felt more at home here than anywhere else, how everyone seemed to fit in and feel welcome. I thought this was an interesting observation, because we learn from the teachings of Lord Caitanya that Vrindavan is identical to Kṛṣṇa's eternal spiritual abode,
(please turn to page 53)



DOCTORS of HAPPINESS



DERIVED FROM assiduous research into human happiness, the findings of Dr. Daniel Gilbert, a Harvard psychology professor both funny and smart, have revealed to him an important truth that will already be familiar to students of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. That venerable text recounts (in Chapter 82 of Canto 10) a discussion among certain learned personages—doctors in the original sense of the term—who dwelt on the planet called Janaloka, which can be regarded as the Harvard of our entire cosmos. During this celestial colloquium, one of the sages tells how, at the beginning of creation, the *Vedas* in personal form (*śrutis*) awaken Mahā-Viṣṇu from His mystic slumber by hymning to him the very knowledge they themselves embody or personify.

The Sanskrit word *veda* means

knowledge. Although any valid knowledge is *veda*, in the strict sense *veda* denotes the uncreated and eternal knowledge on the basis of which the entire creation is produced by Mahā-Viṣṇu (and His agents). The world is designed according to prior Vedic knowledge, as engineers assemble an aircraft from blueprints. *Veda* is not to be confounded with the “knowledge” we humans work up from our investigations of the world and our picayune efforts to reverse-engineer bits of creation.

All the same, a humble laborer in the human knowledge-factory like Professor Gilbert sometimes stumbles on truth, and there is truth to be found in his well-received book *Stumbling on Happiness*. This truth is conveyed in the title

The personified Vedas hymn transcendental knowledge to Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu when He awakens from His mystic sleep.

A Harvard professor discovers something about happiness that Vedic sages knew long ago.

By Ravindra Svarūpa Dāsa

of his blog posting “What You Don’t Know Makes You Nervous,” reprinted on the op-ed page of *The New York Times*.

Our unhappiness, Professor Gilbert finds, arises not so much from our present circumstances, exiguous though they may be, as from our anxieties concerning our future. We have a neural mechanism that can keep us happy even in difficult times, he argues; it is fear about the uncertainties of the future that renders people anxious and miserable.

Dr. Gilbert is certainly correct. Here, from the *Bhāgavatam* (10.87.32), is the statement of the *śrūtis* to the Lord:

the next life holds. So they are therefore in constant anxiety.

An interesting Sanskrit word that indicates a state of security, devoid of any anxiety, is *kṣema*. It is derived from the verbal root *kṣi*, which means to abide, stay, or dwell, especially in an undisturbed or secret residence. *Kṣema* as a noun means safety, peace, rest, security. The Monier-Williams dictionary tells us that the phrase *kṣemaṁ te*—“peace or security may be unto thee”—is cited in Manu’s Lawbook as “a polite address to a Vaiśya [merchant], asking him whether his property is secure.”

We encounter the word *kṣema* in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.22), where

fully Kṛṣṇa conscious the Lord protects him from falling down to a miserable conditioned life.

In other places, Prabhupāda cites this text as assuring that Kṛṣṇa takes responsibility for even the material necessities of a devotee. In such cases, the devotee is released from all anxiety about the future.

The word *kṣema* makes an interesting appearance in the Eleventh Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which tells of King Nimi’s meeting with the nine Yogendras, the great liberated sons of Rṣabhadeva, who traveled together freely throughout the universe. Nimi asks them (11.2.30) to explicate the *ātyantikaṁ kṣemaṁ*—the unsurpassable good or supreme position of peace and security. The phrase is explained in the commentary to the verse:

According to Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī the words *ātyantikaṁ kṣemaṁ*, or

“the supreme good,” indicate that situation in which one cannot be touched by even the slightest fear. Now we are entangled in the cycle of birth, old age, disease and death (*saṁsāre*). Because our entire situation can be devastated in a single moment, we are constantly in fear. But the pure devotees of the Lord can teach us the practical way to free ourselves from material existence and thus to abolish all types of fear.

Dr. Gilbert sees uncertainty of the future as the source of unhappiness. In his blog, he presents instances in which patients made certain by physicians of a future medical affliction are nevertheless happier than those whom physicians give only the possibility of the affliction.

Yet we can understand that such happiness is relative. Anxiety remains. No one knows with any surety what the future will bring, and all face the ultimate unknown—death, “the undiscovered country, from whose bourn no traveler returns,” as Hamlet observed in his

Kṛṣṇa assumes the burden of seeing that devotees get what they require and securely possess whatever they have gained.

The wise, who understand how Your *māyā* utterly bewilders all people, devote themselves completely to You, the source of liberation. How could the terrors of existence afflict Your faithful followers? For those who refuse Your shelter, Your furrowed brow manifests the turning three-rimmed wheel of time, which keeps them perpetually in fear.

In this passage, the terrors of existence (*bhava-bhayam*) are explicitly related to the movement of time, whose rim is composed of three sections—past, present, and future.

Śrīla Prabhupāda puts it succinctly in his commentary to *Bhagavad-gītā* 10.4–5: “Fear is due to worrying about the future.” He expands on this:

A person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness has no fear because by his activities he is sure to go back to the spiritual sky, back home, back to Godhead. Therefore his future is very bright. Others, however, do not know what their future holds; they have no knowledge of what

Kṛṣṇa avers that for those who concentrate on Him exclusively, remaining perpetually fixed in devotion, He bears the burden of their *yoga-kṣemaṁ*. In this compound, *yoga*—which has a root sense of yoking or joining—means acquisition (of goods, for example), and *kṣemaṁ* means the secure possession of that which has been acquired. Kṛṣṇa, then, promises that for devotees wholly dedicated to and dependent upon Him, He Himself assumes the burden (*vahāmi*) of seeing that they get what they require and securely possess whatever they have gained. In the commentary, Prabhupāda elucidates *yoga-kṣemaṁ* in its spiritual context:

Such a devotee undoubtedly approaches the Lord without difficulty. This is called yoga. By the mercy of the Lord, such a devotee never comes back to this material condition of life. *Kṣema* refers to the merciful protection of the Lord. The Lord helps the devotee to achieve Kṛṣṇa consciousness by yoga, and when he becomes

famous soliloquy. The fear is always with us, try as we will to pay it no mind. As William James noted, not much is needed to bring “the worm at the core of all our usual springs of delight into full view.”

John Updike has a typically stunning metaphor: “We all dream, and we all stand aghast at the mouth of

the caves of our deaths; and this is our way in.”

Dr. Gilbert of Harvard has informed us about the happiness problem, but he has much more to do. The learned doctors of Janaloka, the nine wise “masters of yoga,” understand what he knows and then some. . . .

When the time comes, we should have no uncertainty. ☸

Ravindra Svarūpa Dāsa, an ISKCON governing body commissioner, lives at the Philadelphia temple, where he joined ISKCON in 1971. He holds a Ph.D. in religion from Temple University.

IN VRINDAVAN

(continued from page 49)

Kṛṣṇaloka, and is therefore everyone’s real eternal home. Seeing and hearing these comments were firsthand proof for me.

Soon, rather than monotonous “hellos,” they were greeting each other with “Rādhē! Rādhē!” the traditional local greeting, meaning “O Rādhā! O Rādhā!”

Transformative Impressions

The energy felt in the ISKCON Vrindavan temple left the most memorable impression on them. Two young women, one American and one English (Elizabeth and Una), said they had never felt so much joy and energy as when visiting this temple, and felt so blessed. Never having seen deities of the Lord before, they joyfully sang the *mahā-mantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—and danced. They never expected such a place existed on this planet, a place where people dance and sing the Lord’s names together indiscriminately, with so much pleasure and inspiration. Never having set foot in an ISKCON temple, they danced in ecstasy as if they had been reborn. Their joy and endless ear-to-ear smiling were evident for days after, as they would tell the others how they’d had one of the most wonderful experiences of their life.

Some commented on how caring the Vrajavasis (residents of Vrindavan) are—even to animals. They witnessed stray dogs and injured cows being cared for selflessly.

Marie, an older French woman with grown-up children, had never left France before. She was in tears after visiting Seva Kunj and Nidhivan, two sites of Kṛṣṇa’s intimate pastimes that are protected by high walls. She spoke of the remarkable peace and joy she felt there and wished she had visited before, when she was younger.

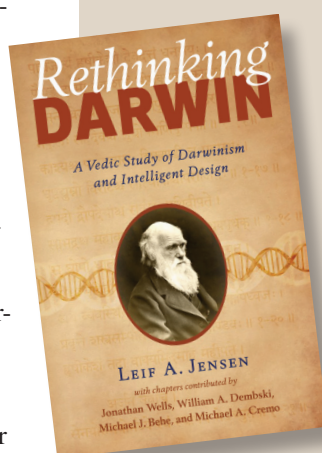
Alida, a young woman from the former Soviet Union, was brought up as a princess with her own servant. She exclaimed she would rather live as a homeless person in Vrindavan than live in a palace elsewhere. Upon entering Śrīla Prabhupāda’s Samādhi, she closed her eyes in astonishment when she recognised Śrīla Prabhupāda from a book she had seen some twenty-two years ago as a child. It was the only book on the family bookshelf she would keep reaching for—and her Muslim parents would keep taking it away from her and putting it back on the shelf. I could see how her fate had finally brought her to Vrindavan. She said she had never before felt the freedom and happiness she felt when dancing in front of the deities.

Darren, an Englishman, tried to miss some yoga classes (even though a register was taken) to experience Gaura Ārati (the daily evening *ārati* ceremony) at the Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Temple. Miu, a well-travelled woman from Japan, stayed on for months afterwards. She prefers Vrindavan to her other world travels and does not want to leave.

Upon visiting the Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Temple, most bought *japa mālās* (beads for chanting) from the temple shop, not only for themselves but for their partners and parents back home. They said that the experience of chanting was so joyful that they would like to take it home and share it with their families.

I felt very happy to have been able to share the sweetness and pleasures of Vrindavan with these yoga students. The sweetness was given to me by my parents and to them by Śrīla Prabhupāda, who kindly came to the Western world to share Kṛṣṇa consciousness, for which I am eternally grateful. ☸

Meera Khurana lives in London. She holds a Ph.D. in computer science.



Darwinism & Intelligent Design

In *Rethinking Darwin*, Danish science writer Leif A. Jensen (Lalitanatha Dasa), in collaboration with leading Intelligent Design proponents such as Dr. Michael Behe, Dr. William Dembski, and Dr. Jonathan Wells, points out flaws in the Darwinian paradigm and examines the case for intelligent design. The argument for design is next expanded with further evidence from archeology, cosmology, and studies of consciousness. Finally, based on the irreducible nature of consciousness, the book suggests an alternative paradigm drawn from the Vedic texts of ancient India.

Available online from store.krishna.com



Prabhupāda at the AVALON BALLROOM

*In January 1967, Śrīla Prabhupāda,
along with counterculture icon Allen Ginsberg,
introduced hundreds of San Francisco hippies
to the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra.*

By Mukunda Goswami

OUR PUBLICITY worked. At 7:45 on show night the Avalon was filled to capacity. I was at the top of the staircase above the front door taking tickets for the first hour. From the top of the long red-carpeted stairway that led up to the hall from the entrance, I could see the line of colorful late arrivals waiting to get in to the Avalon. We'd stuck with our "first-come-first-served" policy in selling tickets, so late-comers were out of luck. Specially deputed agents of the San Francisco Fire Department stood outside at the hall's main entrance, monitoring the number of people inside.

When someone came out, they'd let someone in, although that wasn't happening much, because those inside really wanted to hold onto their places.

Chet poked his head out of his office door and yelled to me. "Looks like a sell-out," he said. "You don't usually get the place full before the show starts. And this is a Sunday!" "Yeah, it's great," I said, feeling excited.

"Thanks for letting us do this here." As I scanned the crowd, I spotted Timothy Leary and Augustus Owsley

heading up the stairs toward me. As I took their tickets, I was surprised to note the strong smell of alcohol wafting around Leary.

"That's weird," I thought. "Leary's so anti-establishment, but getting drunk is the 'establishment' way of getting high. Shouldn't he of all people be high on LSD?" I took the ticket from him, and he proceeded to a nearby phone booth where he sat talking on the phone for the rest of my ticket shift.

Finally, at 9:00 PM, Malati came to relieve me of my ticket duties so I could get back to managing the show. Inside the ballroom devotees were handing out thousands of orange wedges to the crowd. I pushed my way through the crush and up the stairs to the balcony to check on how Ben and Roger were doing with their light show. "Hey, how's it going?" I asked.

"Yeah, great, man. We're all ready to go here," Roger said. "Hey, we just brewed some tea—really nice stuff. You want some?"

"Nope, it's OK," I said. "I'd better get back out there." "Hey, no, come on," Ben said. "Have some. It'll relax you. You look like you need it."

I hesitated. “Well, OK, just a small cup.” Roger grabbed a little Japanese-style cup without a handle and poured me some of the liquid from a blue ceramic teapot. I took a couple of sips to be polite. It had a bitter undertone.

“Thanks a lot. I’ve really got to get going.” They waved to me, smiling, and as I headed down the stairs to the dance floor, I realized that the tea had been spiked with acid. “No wonder it tasted bitter,” I thought, my head spinning.

It was time to start the show, so in my mildly altered state I did my best to round up the devotees for

level of consciousness,” not through drugs but through genuine spiritual experience.

After our serene opening, Moby Grape took the stage and the crowd went wild.

Malati was right—they were fantastic. The ballroom shook with their amplification, and the crowd gyrated in time with Ben and Roger’s strobe lights and their multi-colored oil shapes projected onto the walls. The colors bounced, cascaded, broke into beads, morphed together and separated, jumping to the beat. The music was deafening, the light show mesmerizing.

before we’d come to California. The stage was about five feet above the dance floor, so I had a good view of the swami as he made his way across the length of the ballroom toward the stage, walking slowly with his wooden cane. The crowd grew quiet as he walked and parted to allow him to pass through. The hush was broken by a few isolated cheers and some scattered applause. It was a bit like the greeting the swami got at San Francisco Airport, only this was bigger—much bigger.

When the swami reached the stage, he stopped for a moment and glanced around; then he saw a small

stairway to his right, which he climbed slowly as if he were deep in thought. Ginsberg greeted him with folded palms when he reached the top. “Welcome, Swami,” he said.

I had a good view of the swami as he made his way across the length of the ballroom toward the stage, walking slowly with his wooden cane.

the opening act—a sort of overture—an Indian-style chant that we hoped would set a mystical, spiritual atmosphere for the evening. We’d managed to get exotic clothing to wear on stage—Merlin gowns for the men and saris for the women—and when we came on the stage, the crowd began to cheer. We sat on brightly colored cushions in front of microphones and began to sing a mellow Krishna mantra with tamboura, harmonium, hand cymbals and drums.

As we sang, I looked out into the crowd. Everyone appeared to be high on something—mostly pot and acid, I thought. Many people had brought their own cushions—tasseled, jeweled, patchworked and embroidered—and they sat on these during our chanting, closing their eyes or joining in with their own wooden flutes or bells. Some stayed standing and swayed in time to the music. A few cried, whether because they were moved by the chanting or simply high I couldn’t tell. What I hoped was that the swami’s chanting and presence would—in the jargon of the Haight—“lift everyone to a higher

Things seemed to be going fine, so I headed backstage to the readying room, where Big Brother was tuning up for their performance. With a bottle of Jim Beam in her hand, Janis Joplin turned away from her mirror as I entered the room.

“Hey, you’re one of the Krishnas, right?” she asked. I nodded. “Why do you feel you have to chant that mantra?” She sounded challenging, if not a bit hostile.

“Because it makes you feel good,” I said moving quickly out of the room. I didn’t want to get into that discussion now. I’d seen her three days earlier walking two large Dobermans down Haight Street holding a half-finished pint of Smirnoff.

When Moby Grape finished playing their hour-long set, fifteen of us stepped onto the stage in preparation for the swami’s appearance. Allen Ginsberg came into the hall and joined us on stage to the accompaniment of loud applause. Finally the swami entered the Avalon through the main door, followed by Ranchor and another New York devotee named Kirtan-ananda, whom I’d met briefly

“Let’s sit.” He gestured toward two large fluffy yellow throw cushions at the front of the stage.

They made a funny pair, Ginsberg with his bushy beard and slightly rumpled brown suit with a white T-shirt underneath, and the swami with his clean-shaven head looking regal in his soft saffron robes as he sat cross-legged, his cane resting across his lap. The hall was quiet except for a few muffled voices and the sounds of some people I didn’t know in khakis who were rushing around the stage positioning microphones in front of Ginsberg and the swami. The hall darkened and the crowd sat down. I started playing the droning tamboura just as color slides of Krishna began appearing on the walls. Up on the mezzanine, Ben and Roger projected the sixteen-word Hare Krishna mantra on the wall behind the stage and focused spotlights onto Ginsberg and the swami. Ginsberg said something into the swami’s ear, and the swami nodded. Ginsberg moved closer to the microphone.

“When I was in India,” he said, “I got enthralled with the mantra we’re going to sing. I’d like you to

sing loud with me. It's meditation that's musical. It'll take you into another dimension, like it does for me every time."

He paused and squinted through the spotlight.

"The mantra is called the *mahamantra*. In Sanskrit, the word *maha* means 'large' or 'great,' and *man* means 'mind.' *Tra* means 'that which delivers.' So the word mantra literally means 'mind deliverance.'

"Sometimes you can have a bad acid trip, and I want you to know that if you ever do, you can stabilize yourself on re-entry by chanting this mantra." He looked earnest and serious, like he was discussing literature with a group of poets at a university. "Now," Ginsberg continued, "I want to introduce you to Swami Bhaktivedanta, who brought this mantra to the place where it was probably most needed, to New York's Lower East Side—to the dispossessed, to the homeless, the lost, the anarchists, the seekers." The crowd applauded and cheered.

"He left India, where life is peaceful, where he could have remained happily chanting in a holy village where people never heard of war and violence, where life is slow and meaningful. But instead, he's here with us tonight, his first time in this city, his first time in America, and he's come to share with us something precious, something to treasure, something serene."

Ginsberg gestured to the swami to speak. The swami's countenance was bright as he responded to the invitation. He spoke slowly, and his ageing voice exuded confidence. "Thank you for inviting me to your beautiful city of San Francisco to speak here," he said. "This chant comes from India. It will lead us to the spiritual world. You may begin tonight or any time. The mantra is not only for Indians. Hare Krishna chanting is for all people, because Krishna is everyone's father. We should not think that Krishna is Hindu god or is for the Indians and not others. He is for everyone." I was excited to hear him as he looked admirably around at the rapt audience. "If He were not, how could

He be God? God cannot be God simply for a particular type of man or for a particular section of society.

"God is God for all human beings, beasts, aquatics, insects, trees, plants—all varieties. That is God. The words of this chanting are Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare."

Ben or Roger bounced the words on the wall behind the swami.

"These words are a transcendental sound incarnation of the Absolute Truth. Incarnation means ... the Sanskrit word is *avatar*, and that is translated into English as 'incarnation.' The root meaning of *avatar* is 'which descends or comes from the transcendental sky,' the spiritual sky to the material sky. Or His bona fide representative comes from that sky to this material plane. That is called *avatar*."

A female voice at the other end of the ballroom yelled, "Yeah!"

Another voice somewhere in the hall yelled out, "I'm God!"

The swami continued unfazed. "So this sound is the sound representation of the Supreme Lord. Material or spiritual, whatever we

have got experience, nothing is separated from the Supreme Absolute Truth. Nothing is separated.

"Everything has emanated from the Absolute Truth. Just like earth. Earth, then from earth, you have got wood, fuel. From fuel, when you get fire, first of all there is smoke. Then, after smoke, there is fire.

"Similarly, there is a link. The whole material cosmic situation, manifestation, what we see, it is just like the smoke. The fire is behind it. That is spiritual sky. But still, in the smoke, you can feel some heat also.

"So similarly, this sound vibration of the spiritual world is here, so that even in this material world, where there is a scarcity of that spiritual fire, we can appreciate, we can feel the warmth of that fire.

"So I wish to thank Mr. Ginsberg and all of you for participating. Now Mr. Ginsberg will chant. Thank you very much."

The audience burst into applause that lasted nearly a minute. Some people stood up and a few whistled and many banged the floor with their hands. A trumpet sounded from the back of the room.

"Thank you, Swami," Ginsberg



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said. "So I'm going to chant the mantra. These are the words," he said, glancing behind him. "They're on the wall behind me for you to follow. I'll chant the whole thing once and then you repeat it. I'm going to sing a melody I learned when I was in Rishikesh in the Himalayas." He paused. "Everyone sing loud! And dance if you feel like it too!" Ginsberg began to sing, and all the devotees on the stage sang the repeat of the mantra. Everyone began playing their instruments after the first few mantras, except for me; I had to quickly re-tune the tamboura to be in tune with Ginsberg. Fortunately, he stayed in the same key throughout his chant.

The audience caught on quickly. Encouraged by the fact that the mantra was being sung by one of their icons, the crowd responded enthusiastically.

Everyone sang along, and most people stood up and began to sway with the beat. As the tempo began to pick up, Ben and Roger made sure the oil pulsations were in time with the beat. The chanting reached a fast tempo quickly; Ginsberg and the few devotees who were keeping time with the instruments had to start everything over again. The audience still stood, waiting. This time Ginsberg started the chanting slowly and kept the tempo constant. The audience's response singing was a roar that echoed through the ballroom.

Suddenly and unexpectedly, the swami stood up from his cushion and raised his arms, gesturing for everyone to do the same. All the devotees on the stage exchanged surprised looks. Janaki and I had seen the swami dance once before at Dr. Mishra's ashram in upstate

New York, but no one else had seen him do this before. And none of us had expected it tonight.

The few still sitting now stood up, and the whole audience danced as one body in one giant motion: left foot over right, right foot over left, left over right, just like the swami was doing. Thousands of arms waved like willows in a grove, fluid, silky and hypnotic. It was rhythmic, yet languid and ballet-like. Everyone, including the snack sellers and bouncers, was swaying back and forth and singing. Only a few stood motionless at the periphery of the ballroom, excluded from the dancing probably because they were too high to take part. Their mouths hung open as they stared at the spectacle and drooled.

Ginsberg removed his microphone from its stand and unwound the cord so that he could hand it to the swami. For a few minutes the swami led the chanting.

As he did so, musicians from the bands joined us on the stage with their instruments. Don Stevenson from Moby Grape sat down behind his set of drums, which was still on stage from their set, Phil Lesh and Pig Pen from The Grateful Dead plugged their guitars into amplifiers, and Peter Albin and Sam Andrew from Big Brother started plucking the strings of their guitars. They all began by caressing their instruments as only musicians do, testing the sound levels cautiously, tuning the strings and adjusting the tones and levels, experimenting as to how they could best accompany and augment the chanting. ☸

Mukunda Goswami was initiated by Śrīla Prabhupāda in 1966, making him one of Prabhupāda's first disciples. He has been faithfully serving his spiritual master ever since. He currently lives in Australia.

This article was excerpted from Miracle on Second Avenue, published by Torchlight Publishing (www.torchlight.com). Wikipedia has an entry about the Avalon Ballroom event: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mantra-Rock_Dance.

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Boston, Massachusetts — 72 Commonwealth Ave., 02116/ Tel. (617) 247-8611/ Fax: (617) 909-5181/ darukrishna@iskconboston.org

Chicago, Illinois — 1716 W. Lunt Ave., 60626/ Tel. (773) 973-0900/ Fax: (773) 973-0526/ chicagoisiskcon@yahoo.com

Columbus, Ohio — 379 W. Eighth Ave., 43201/ Tel. (614) 421-1661/ premvilasdas.rns@gmail.com

◆ **Dallas, Texas** — 5430 Gurley Ave., 75223/ Tel. (214) 827-6330/ Fax: (214) 823-7264/ tkkrishnas@aol.com; restaurant: vegetarianatase@aol.com

◆ **Denver, Colorado** — 1400 Cherry St., 80220/ Tel. (303) 333-5461/ Fax: (303) 321-9052

Detroit, Michigan — 383 Lenox Ave., 48215/ Tel. (313) 824-6000/ gaurangi108@hotmail.com

Gainesville, Florida — 214 N.W. 14th St., 32603/ Tel. (352) 336-4183/ Fax: (352) 379-2927/ kalakantha.acbsp@pamho.net

Hartford, Connecticut — 1683 Main St., E. Hartford, 06108/ Tel. & fax: (860) 289-7252/ pyari@sbglobal.net

◆ **Honolulu, Hawaii** — 51 Coelho Way, 96817/ Tel. (808) 595-4913/ rama108@bigfoot.com

Houston, Texas — 1320 W. 34th St., 77018/ Tel. (713) 686-4482/ Fax: (713) 956-9968/ management@iskconhouston.org

Kansas City, Missouri — 5201 Paseo Blvd., 64110/ Tel. (816) 924-5619/ Fax: (816) 924-5640/ rvc@rvc.edu

Laguna Beach, California — 285 Legion St., 92651/ Tel. (949) 494-7029/ info@lagunatemple.com

Las Vegas, Nevada — Govinda's Center of Vedic India, 7181 Dean Martin Dr., 89118/ Tel. (702) 434-8332/ info@govindascenter.com

◆ **Los Angeles, California** — 3764 Watseka Ave., 90034/ Tel. (310) 836-2676/ Fax: (310) 839-2715/ membership@harekrishnala.com

◆ **Miami, Florida** — 3220 Virginia St., 33133 (mail: 3109 Grand Ave., #491, Coconut Grove, FL 33133)/ Tel. (305) 442-7218/ devotionalservice@iskcon-miami.org

New Orleans, Louisiana — 2936 Esplanade Ave., 70119/ Tel. (504) 304-0032 (office) or (504) 638-1944 (temple)/ gopal211@aol.com

◆ **New York, New York** — 305 Schermerhorn St., Brooklyn, 11217/ Tel. (718) 855-6714/ Fax: (718) 875-6127/ ramahadra@aol.com

◆ **New York, New York** — The Bhakti Center, 25 First Ave., 10003/ Tel. (212) 253-6182

Orlando, Florida — 2651 Rouse Rd., 32817/ Tel. (407) 257-3865/ info@iskconorlando.com

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania — 41 West Allens Ln., 19119/ Tel. (215) 247-4600/ Fax: (215) 247-8702/ iskconphilly@aol.com

◆ **Philadelphia, Pennsylvania** — 1408 South St., 19146/ Tel. (215) 985-9303/ savecows@aol.com

Phoenix, Arizona — 100 S. Weber Dr., Chandler, 85226/ Tel. (480) 705-4900/ Fax: (480) 705-4901/ premadhatidd@live.com

Portland, Oregon — 3766 SE Division, 97202/ Tel. (503) 236-6734/ info@iskconportland.com

◆ **St. Louis, Missouri** — 3926 Lindell Blvd., 63108/ Tel. (314) 535-8085 or 534-1708/ Fax: (314) 535-0672/ iskcon.stl@pamho.net

San Antonio, Texas — 6772 Oxford Trace, 78240/ Tel. (210) 401-6576/ aadasa@gmail.com

◆ **San Diego, California** — 1030 Grand Ave., Pacific Beach, 92109/ Tel. (858) 483-2500 or 272-8263/ Fax: (858) 483-0941/ krishna.sandiego@gmail.com

San Jose, California — 951 S. Bascom Ave., 95128/ Tel. (408) 293-4959/ iskconsanjose@yahoo.com

Seattle, Washington — 1420 228th Ave. S.E., Sammamish, 98075/ Tel. (425) 246-8436/ Fax: (425) 868-8928/ info@vedicculturalcenter.org

◆ **Spanish Fork, Utah** — Krishna Temple Project & KHON Radio, 8628 S. State Rd., 84660/ Tel. (801) 798-3559/ Fax: (801) 798-9121/ carudas@earthlink.net

Tallahassee, Florida — 1323 Nyllic St., 32304/ Tel. & fax: (850) 224-3803/ darudas@gmail.com

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◆ **Tucson, Arizona** — 711 E. Blacklidge Dr., 85719/ Tel. (520) 792-0630/ Fax: (520) 791-0906/ sandaminidd@cs.com

Washington, D.C. — 10310 Oaklyn Dr., Potomac, Maryland 20854/ Tel. (301) 299-2100/ Fax: (301) 299-5025/ ad@pamho.net

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◆ **Alachua, Florida (New Raman Reti)** — 17306 N.W. 112th Blvd., 32615 (mail: P.O. Box 819, 32616)/ Tel. (386) 462-2017/ Fax: (386) 462-2641/ alachuatemple@gmail.com

Carriere, Mississippi (New Talavan) — 31492 Anner Rd., 39426/ Tel. (601) 749-9460 or 799-1354/ Fax: (601) 799-2924/ talavan@hughes.net

Gurabo, Puerto Rico (New Govardhana Hill) — Carr. 181, Km. 16.3, Bo. Santa Rita, Gurabo (mail: HC-01, Box 8440, Gurabo, PR 00778)/ Tel. (787) 367-3530 or (787) 737-1722/ manonatha@gmail.com

Hillsborough, North Carolina (New Goloka) — 1032 Dimmocks Mill Rd., 27278/ Tel. (919) 732-6492/ bkgoswami@earthlink.net

◆ **Moundsville, West Virginia (New Vrindaban)** — R.D. No. 1, Box 319, Hare Krishna Ridge, 26041/ Tel. (304) 843-1600; Guest House, (304) 845-5905/ Fax: (304) 845-0023/ mail@newvrindaban.com

Mulberry, Tennessee (Murari-sevaka) — 532 Murari Ln., 37359 (mail: P.O. Box 108, Lynchburg, TN 37352)/ Tel. & fax: (931) 759-6888/ murari_sevaka@yahoo.com

Port Royal, Pennsylvania (Gita Nagari) — 534 Gita Nagari Rd., 17082/ Tel. (717) 527-4101/ dhruva.bts@pamho.net

Sandy Ridge, North Carolina — Prabhupada Village, 1283 Prabhupada Rd., 27046/ Tel. (336) 593-9888/ madanmohanmohini@yahoo.com

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Hato Rey, Puerto Rico — Tamal Krishna's Veggie Garden, 131 Eleanor Roosevelt, 00918/ Tel. (787) 754-6959/ Fax: (787) 756-7769/ tkveggiegarden@aol.com

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Belfast, Northern Ireland — Brooklands, 140 Upper Dunmurray Ln., BT17 OHE/ Tel. +44 (28) 9062 0530

Birmingham, England — 84 Stanmore Rd., Edgbaston B16 9TB/ Tel. +44 (121) 420 4999/ birmingham@iskcon.org.uk

Cardiff, Wales — The Soul Centre, 116 Cowbridge Rd., East Canton CF11 9DX/ Tel. +44 (29) 2039 0391/ the.soul.centre@pamho.net

Coventry, England — Kingfield Rd., Coventry (mail: 19 Gloucester St., Coventry CV1 3BZ)/ Tel. +44 (24) 7655 2822 or 5420/ haridas.kds@pamho.net

◆ **Dublin, Ireland** — 83 Middle Abbey St., Dublin 1/ Tel. +353 (1) 661 5095/ dublin@krishna.ie; Govinda's: info@govindas.ie

Leicester, England — 21 Thoresby St., North Evington, LE5 4GU/ Tel. +44 (116) 276 2587/ pradyumna.jas@pamho.net

Lesmahagow, Scotland — Karuna Bhavan, Bankhouse Rd., Lesmahagow, Lanarkshire, ML11 0ES/ Tel. +44 (1555) 894790/ Fax: +44 (1555) 894526/ karunabhavan@aol.com

◆ **London, England (city)** — 10 Soho St., W1D 3DL/ Tel. +44 (20) 7437-3662; residential /pujaris, 7439-3606; shop, 7287-0269; Govinda's Restaurant, 7437-4928/ Fax: +44 (20) 7439-1127/ london@pamho.net

◆ **London, England (country)** — Bhaktivedanta Manor, Dharam Marg, Hilfield Ln., Watford, Herts, WD25 8EZ/ Tel. +44 (1923) 851000/ Fax: +44 (1923) 851006/ info@krishnatemple.com; (for accommodations:) bmguesthouse@krishna.com

London, England (south) — 42 Enmore Rd., South Norwood, SE25 5NG/ Tel. +44 7988857530/ krishnaprema89@hotmail.com

London, England (Kings Cross) — 102 Caledonian Rd., Kings Cross, Islington, N1 9DN/ Tel. +44 (20) 7168 5732/ foodforalluk@aol.com

Manchester, England — 20 Mayfield Rd., Whalley Range, M16 8FT/ Tel. +44 (161) 226 4416/ contact@iskconmanchester.com

Newcastle-upon-Tyne, England — 304 Westgate Rd., NE4 6AR/ Tel. +44 (191) 272 1911

◆ **Swansea, Wales** — 8 Craddock St., SA1 3EN/ Tel. +44 (1792) 468469/ iskcon.swansea@pamho.net; restaurant: govin-das@hotmail.com

RURAL COMMUNITIES

London, England — (contact Bhaktivedanta Manor: Krishna conscious programs are held regularly in more than forty other cities in the U.K. For information, contact ISKCON Reader Services, P. O. Box 730, Watford WD25 8EZ, UK; www.iskcon.org.uk)

Upper Lough Erne, Northern Ireland — Govindadwipa Dhama, Inisrath Island, Derrylin, Co. Fermanagh, BT92 9GN/ Tel. +44 (28) 6772 1512/ govindadwipa@pamho.net

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Dublin, Ireland — Govinda's, 18 Merrion Row, Dublin 2/ Tel. +353 (1) 661 5095/ praghosa.sdg@pamho.net

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AUSTRALIA

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Brisbane — 95 Bank Rd., Graceville (mail: P.O. Box 83, Indooroopilly), QLD 4068/ Tel. +61 (7) 3379-5455/ Fax: +61 (7) 3379-5880

Canberra — 44 Limestone Ave., Ainslie, ACT 2602 (mail: P.O. Box 1411, Canberra, ACT 2601)/ Tel. & fax: +61 (2) 6262-6208

Melbourne — 197 Danks St. (mail: P.O. Box 125), Albert Park, VIC 3206/ Tel. +61 (3) 9699-5122/ Fax: +61 (3) 9690-4093/ melbourne@pamho.net

Newcastle — 28 Bull St., Mayfield, NSW 2304/ Tel. +61 (2) 4967-7000/ iskcon_newcastle@yahoo.com.au

Perth — 155-159 Canning Rd., Kalamunda (mail: P.O. Box 201 Kalamunda 6076)/ Tel. +61 (8) 6293-1519/ perth@pamho.net

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Sydney — 180 Falcon St., North Sydney, NSW 2060 (mail: P.O. Box 459, Cammeray, NSW 2062)/ Tel. +61 (2) 9959-4558/ Fax: +61 (2) 9957-1893/ admin@iskcon.com.au

Sydney — Govinda's Yoga and Meditation Centre, 112 Darlinghurst Rd., Darlinghurst NSW 2010 (mail: P.O. Box 174, Kings Cross 1340)/ Tel. +61 (2) 9380-5162/ Fax: +61 (2) 9360-1736/ sita@govindas.com.au

RURAL COMMUNITIES

Bambra, VIC (New Nandagram) — 50 Seaches Outlet, off 1265 Winchelsea Deans Marsh Rd., Bambra VIC 3241/ Tel. +61 (3) 5288-7383

Cessnock, NSW (New Gokula) — Lewis Lane, off Mount View Rd., Millfield, near Cessnock (mail: P.O. Box 399, Cessnock, NSW 2325)/ Tel. +61 (2) 4998-1800/ Fax: +61 (2) 9957-1893/ iskconfarm@mac.com

Murwillumbah, NSW (New Govardhana) — Tyalgum Rd., Eungella (mail: P.O. Box 687), NSW 2484/ Tel. +61 (2) 6672-6579/ Fax: +61 (2) 6672-5498/ ajita@in.com.au

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Brisbane — Govinda's, 99 Elizabeth St., 1st Floor, QLD 4000/ Tel. +61 (7) 3210-0255

Brisbane — Krishna's Cafe, 1st Floor, 82 Vulture St., West End, QLD 4000/ brisbane@pamho.net

Burleigh Heads — Govinda's, 20 James St., Burleigh Heads, QLD 4220/ Tel. +61 (7) 5607-0782/ ajita@in.com.au

Maroochydoore — Govinda's Vegetarian Cafe, 2/7 First Ave., QLD 4558/ Tel. +61 (7) 5451-0299

Melbourne — Crossways, 1st Floor, 123 Swanston St., VIC 3000/ Tel. +61 (3) 9650-2939

Melbourne — Gopal's, 139 Swanston St., VIC 3000/ Tel. +61 (3) 9650-1578

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Christchurch, NZ — 83 Bealey Ave. (mail: P.O. Box 25-190)/ Tel. +64 (3) 366-5174/

Fax: +64 (3) 366-1965/ iskconchch@clear.net.nz

Hamilton, NZ — 188 Maui St., RD 8, Te Rapa/ Tel. +64 (7) 850-5108/ rmaster@wave.co.nz

Labasa, Fiji — Delailabasa (mail: P.O. Box 133)/ Tel. +679 812912

Lautoka, Fiji — 5 Tavewa Ave. (mail: P.O. Box 125)/ Tel. +679 6664112/ regprakash@excite.com

Nausori, Fiji — Hare Krishna Cultural Centre, 2nd Floor, Shop & Save Building, 11 Gulam Nadi St., Nausori Town (mail: P.O. Box 2183, Govt. Bldgs., Suva)/ Tel. +679 9969748 or 3475097/ Fax: +679 3477436/ vdas@frca.org.fj

Rakiraki, Fiji — Rewasa (mail: P.O. Box 204)/ Tel. +679 694243

Sigatoka, Fiji — Sri Sri Radha Damodar Temple, Off Mission St., Sigatoka Town/ Tel. +679 9373703 or 6520866/ drgsmarna@connect.com.fj

Suva, Fiji — 166 Brewster Street (mail: P.O. Box 4229, Samabula)/ Tel. +679 3318441/

Fax: +679 3100016/ iskconsuva@connect.com.fj

Wellington, NZ — 105 Newlands Rd., Newlands/ Tel. +64 (4) 478-4108/

info@iskconwellington.org.nz

Wellington, NZ — Gaura Yoga Centre, 1st Floor, 175 Vivian Street (mail: P.O. Box 6271, Marion Square)/ Tel. +64 (4) 801-5500/ yoga@gauryoga.co.nz

RURAL COMMUNITY

Auckland, NZ (New Varshan) — Hwy. 28, Riverhead, next to Huapai Golf Course (mail: R.D. 2, Kumeu)/ Tel. +64 (9) 412-8075/ Fax: +64 (9) 412-7130

RESTAURANT

Wellington, NZ — Higher Taste Hare Krishna Restaurant, Old Bank Arcade, Ground Floor, Corner Customhouse, Quay & Hunter St., Wellington/ Tel. +64 (4) 472-2233

EUROPE (partial list)

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Barcelona — Plaza Reial 12, Entlo 2, 08002/ Tel. +34 93 302-5194/ templobcn@hotmail.com

Bergamo, Italy — Villaggio Hare Krishna (da Medolago strada per Terno d'Isola), 24040

Chignolo d'Isola (BG)/ Tel. +39 (035) 4940706/ villaggio.hare.krsna@hare.krsna.it

Budapest — III. Lehel Street 15-17 (Csillaghegy), 1039 Budapest/ Tel. +36 (1) 391-0435/

Fax: (1) 397-5219/ nai@pamho.net

Copenhagen — Skjulhoj Alle 44, 2720 Vanlose, Copenhagen/ Tel. +45 4828 6446/

Fax: +45 4828 7331/ iskcon.denmark@pamho.net

Grödinge, Sweden — Radha-Krishna Temple, Korsnäs Gård, 14792 Grödinge/ Tel. +46 (8) 53029800/ Fax: +46 (8) 53025062/ bmd@pamho.net

Helsinki — Ruoholahdenkatu 24 D (III krs) 00180/ Tel. +358 (9) 694-9879 or -9837/

Email: harekrishna@harekrishna.fi

◆ **Lisbon** — Rua Dona Estefânia, 91 R/C 1000 Lisboa/ Tel. & fax: +351(1) 314-0314 or 352-0038

Madrid — Espíritu Santo 19, 28004 Madrid/ Tel. +34 91 521-3096

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Paris — 230 Avenue de la Division Leclerc, 95200 Sarcelles Village/ Tel. +33 (1) 39885358/

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Prague, Czech Republic — Postal address: Hare Krishna Temple, Luzce 48, 267 18, post office

Karlstein, Czech Republic (for directions: http://harekrsna.cz/cvs/how_get_there)/

Tel. +420 311 516 558 or +420 603 205 991/ info@harekrsna.cz

◆ **Radhadesh, Belgium** — Chateau de Petite Somme, 6940 Septon-Durbuy/ Tel. +32 (086) 322926 (restaurant: 321421)/ Fax: +32 (086) 322929/ radhadesh@pamho.net

◆ **Rome** — Govinda Centro Hare Krsna, via di Santa Maria del Pianto 16, 00186/

Tel. +39 (6) 68891540/ govinda.roma@harekrsna.it

◆ **Stockholm** — Fridhemsgatan 22, 11240/ Tel. +46 (08) 654-9002/ Fax: +46 (8) 650-881/

Restaurant: Tel. & fax: +46 (8) 654-9004/ lokanatha@hotmail.com

Warsaw — Mysiadlo k. Warszawy, 05-500 Piaseczno, ul. Zakret 11/ Tel. +48 (22) 750-7797

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Hungary (New Vraja-dhama) — Krisna-völgy, 8699 Somogyvamos, Fő u, 38/ Tel. & fax:

+36 (85) 540-002 or 340-185/ info@krisnavolgy.hu

Italy (Villa Vrindavan) — Via Scopeti 108, 50026 San Casciano in Val di Pesa (FL)/ Tel. +39 (55) 820054/ Fax: +39 (55) 828470/ isvaripriya@libero.it

Spain (New Vraja Mandala) — (Santa Clara) Brihuega, Guadalajara/ Tel. +34 949 280436

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Locarno, Switzerland — Govinda Restaurant, Via Della Motta 10, Locarno 6600/ Tel. +41 (91) 7523852 or 796260804/ radhakanta@pamho.net

Milan — Govinda's, Via Valpetrosa 5, 20123/ Tel. +39 (2) 862417

Oslo — Krishna's Cuisine, Kirkeveien 59B, 0364/ Tel. +47 (2) 260-6250

Paris — L'arbre à Souhaits de Govinda, 18 rue Caroline, 75017/ Tel. 0142935539

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Moscow — Leningradsky Prospect, Vladeniev 39 (mail: Begovaya str., 13, OPS 284, a/y 17,

125284 Moscow)/ Tel. +7 (495) 7394377/ temple@veda.ru

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or 897810623/ swami.bvv.narasimha@pamho.net

Chittagong, Bangladesh — Sri Krishna Mandir, in front of Afmi Plaza, Prabartak Sangha (mail:

P.O. Box 440)/ Tel. +880 (31) 2551950, 610822; or 1819395948/ iskconctg@gmail.com

Dhaka, Bangladesh — 79 Swamibag, Dhaka-11/ Tel. +880 (2) 7122747 or 7122488/

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Hong Kong — 6/F Oceanview Court, 27 Chatham Road South (mail: P.O. Box 98919)/

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Manila, Philippines — Radha-Madhava Center, #9105 Banuyo St., San Antonio village, Makati

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Myitkyina, Myanmar — ISKCON Sri Jagannath Temple, Bogyoke Street, Shansu Taung,

Myitkyina, Kachin State/ mahanadi@mptmail.net.mm

Taipei, Taiwan — Zhong Xiao East Rd. Sec. 2, Lane 39, Alley 2, No. 3, 2F/ Tel. +886 (2) 2395-

6010 or 2395-6715/ dayal.nitai.tkg@pamho.net

Tokyo, Japan — Subaru 1F, 4-19-6 Kamitakada, Nakano-ku, Tokyo 164-0002/ Tel. +81 (3) 5343-

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Tel. +58 (212) 550-1818

Guayaquil, Ecuador — 6 de Marzo 226 and V. M. Rendon/ Tel. +593 (4) 308412 or 309420/

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◆ **Lima, Peru** — Schell 634 Miraflores/ Tel. +51 (1) 444-2871

Mexico City, Mexico — Tiburcio Montiel 45, Colonia San Miguel, Chapultepec D.F., 11850/

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San Salvador, El Salvador — 8a Avenida Norte, Casa No. 2-4, Santa Tecla, La Libertad/

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Johannesburg, South Africa — 7971 Capricorn Ave. (entrance on Nirvana Dr. East), Ext. 9, Lenasia

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Ladysmith, South Africa — 19 Azalea Dr., 4470/ Tel. +27 (084) 6108666, (036) 6330968,

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Lagos, Nigeria — No. 23 Egbeyemi St., off Coker Rd., Ilupeju, Lagos (mail: P.O. Box 8793,

Marina)/ Tel. +234 8069245577 or 7066011800/ iskcon_lagos@yahoo.com

Mombasa, Kenya — Hare Krishna House, Sauti Ya Kenya and Kisumu Rds. (mail: P.O. Box 82224,

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Nairobi, Kenya — Hare Krishna Close, off West Nagara Rd., Nairobi 0100 (mail: P.O. Box 28946)/

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◆ **Phoenix, Mauritius** — Hare Krishna Land, Srila Prabhupada St., Pont Fer/ Tel. +230 6965804/

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The Misuse of Yoga and Everything Else

ACCORDING TO *Yoga Journal*, approximately fifteen million people in the United States practice yoga, usually of a type that consists of controlled breathing and various poses that stretch and align the body. While many people do yoga as a spiritual practice, it is gaining in popularity especially for its health benefits, becoming a genuine contender in the fitness industry.

We *bhakti-yogis* tend to cringe when we see how yoga has broken free from its spiritual moorings. You're supposed to practice yoga for spiritual enlightenment, we protest, not to improve your digestion or libido.

But why limit our disdain to the misuse of yoga? After all, from the viewpoint of our scriptures and spiritual teachers, aren't most people misusing everything?

The Vedic scriptures, especially the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, inform and guide the lives of Śrīla Prabhupāda's students. For those who don't have his guidance, a cursory overview of the vast Vedic literature can leave even well-intentioned seekers dazed and bewildered. But an overriding message weaves through the confusing complexity of ideas, stories, and personalities: Human life is meant for discovering the truth of our existence, and everything we do should serve to achieve that goal.

We decry the misuse of yoga because yoga is supposed to be a concentrated attempt to uncover the Truth and live in harmony with it. But since all aspects of life should support that attempt, all activities devoid of a spiritual connection are condemnable.

Take eating, for example. While we Hare Kṛṣṇa people are happy to see more and more people take up vegetarianism, thus decreas-

ing the amount of violence inflicted on God's innocent creatures, we know that a vegetarian diet is not by definition spiritual. To spiritualize our diet—so that it truly aids our spiritual progress—we need to connect it with God by offering Him whatever we eat before we eat it.

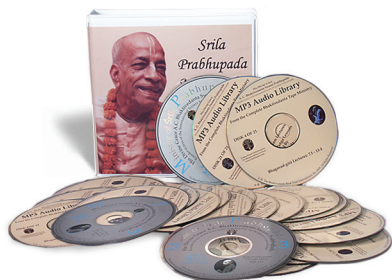
This principle of connecting our actions with God is the essence of yoga. It's what the word *yoga* means. Fitness yoga shares in the fault of materialism, which connects everything to limited and temporary ideals, especially the ideal of happiness centered on the body—and on people and things related to the body.

When Lord Kṛṣṇa tells us in *Bhagavad-gītā* to offer everything we do to Him, He's showing us how to make our life a continuous yoga session. When we do yoga to promote a healthy body for use in Kṛṣṇa's service, then it's a spiritual activity; it's real yoga. The same can be said for all other aspects of our lives. Working, traveling, reading, raising children, listening to music—they're all yoga when done to support our spiritual quest.

The entire way of life promoted in our scriptures is a kind of yoga. Śrīla Prabhupāda began spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the West just as yoga was becoming popular here. He would often point out that a short meditation session to begin the day would do little to help people make spiritual progress. On the evidence of Lord Kṛṣṇa's teachings in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the words and examples of previous spiritual teachers delivering those teachings, and his own realization, Śrīla Prabhupāda was convinced that even today's best yoga regimens can't match the transformative spiritual power of connecting all of our activities to Kṛṣṇa by the practice of *bhakti-yoga*.

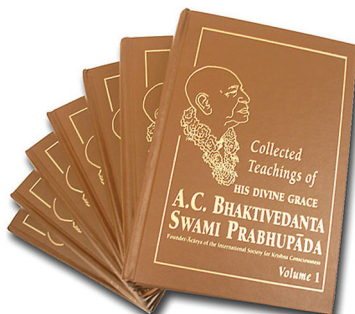
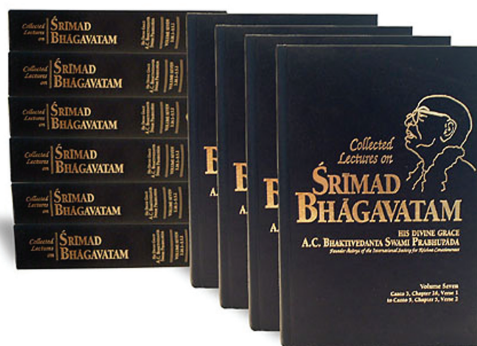
—Nāgarāja Dāsa

Teachings of Śrīla Prabhupāda

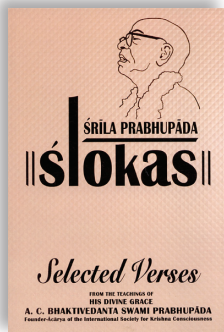


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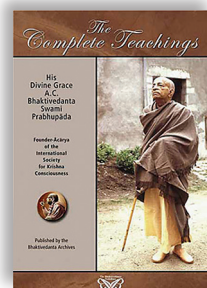


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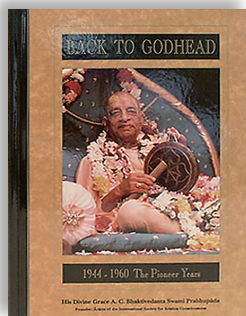
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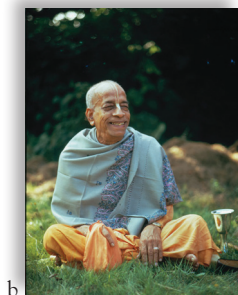
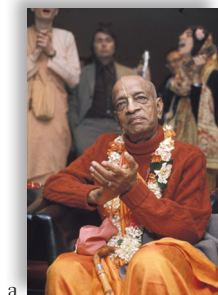
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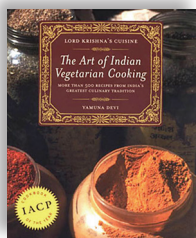
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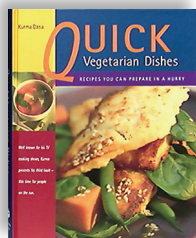
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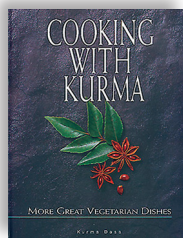
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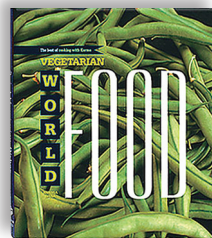
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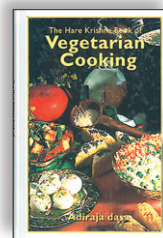
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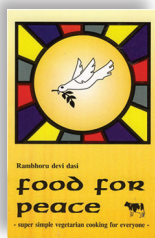
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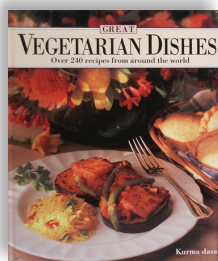
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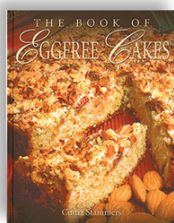
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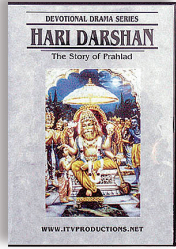
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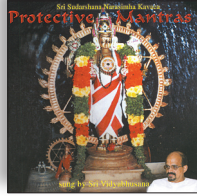




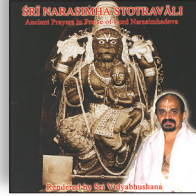
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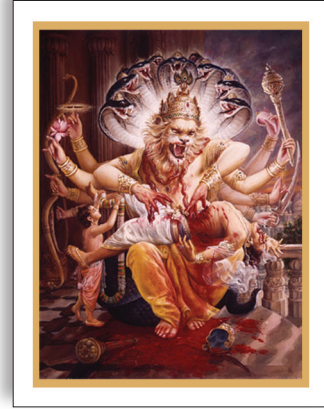
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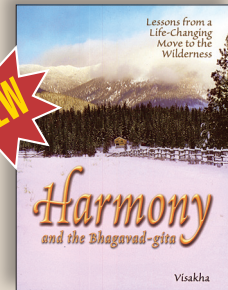
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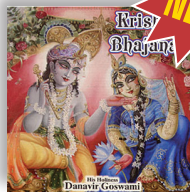
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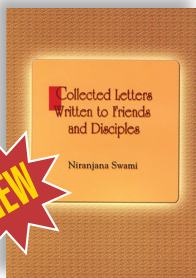
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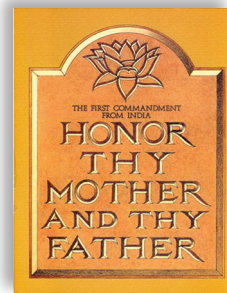
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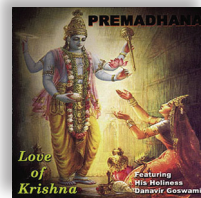


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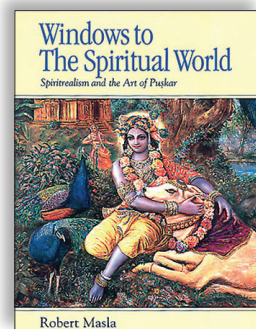
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The Personality of Godhead may not be present before one's eyes, but if one is sincere in wanting such guidance the Lord will send a bona fide person who can guide one properly back home, back to Godhead.

His Divine Grace A. C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.7.46, Purport

Those who follow this imperishable path of devotional service and who completely engage themselves with faith, making Me the supreme goal, are very, very dear to Me.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa
Bhagavad-gītā 12.20

O Lord, may the bumblebee of my mind always lovingly stay at the lotus flower of Your feet. Please give me the medicine that brings peace. Please save me from the fever of repeated birth and death. Please give me steady and mature devotional service to You.

Lord Brahmā
Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa 4.6.22

Some people worship the Lord in an untidy or careless manner; some worship Him by bending down on their knees; still other close their eyes while worshipping His impersonal Brahman aspect. Some people worship Him by assuming various yoga postures, and some immerse themselves in the congregational chanting of the Lord's holy names;

but all of them worship that one and only supreme treasure—Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura
Gītāvalī, Śreyo-Nirṇaya, Song 5

Unto one who has transcendental qualities due to friendly behavior with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, all living entities offer honor, just as water automatically flows down by nature.

Maitreya Ṛṣi
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.9.47

Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, greater than the greatest. The best of the sages, headed by Nārada, who are all thoroughly learned in the *Vedas* and Vedic supplements, glorify Lord Kṛṣṇa with greatly affectionate words.

Prayer to Lord Gopāla, Text 16
(from *Nārada-pañcarātra*)

Whether one is a *brāhmaṇa*, a *sannyāsī*, or a *śūdra*—regardless of what he is—he can become a spiritual master if he knows the science of Kṛṣṇa.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 8.128

Absorbing your mind in meditation upon the divine feet of the spiritual master and the holy Vaiṣṇavas, chant the names of Lord Hari [Kṛṣṇa] in ecstasy and worship the transcendental realm of Vṛndāvana.

Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura
Nāma-saṅkīrtana 9

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May 28–29: Baltimore Rathayātrā
June 4–5: Atlanta Pāṇihāṭī Festival
June 11: New York City Rathayātrā
June 18–19: Jacksonville Beach, Florida, Rathayātrā
July 3–4: Washington, D.C., Rathayātrā
July 9–10: Montreal Rathayātrā
July 16–17: Toronto Rathayātrā
July 19: Thunder Bay, Ontario, Krishna Culture Tour
July 23: Calgary Rathayātrā
July 31: Los Angeles Rathayātrā
August 7: San Francisco Rathayātrā
August 13–14: Vancouver Rathayātrā
August 21–22: Vancouver Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī, Vyāsa Pūjā
August 27: Edmonton, Alberta, Rathayātrā
September 8–12: Joshua Tree, California, BhaktiFest
September 17–18: Boston Rathayātrā
September 24: Philadelphia Rathayātrā
October 8: Potomac, Maryland, Śrī Rāmacandra
Vijayotsava Festival

IMPORTANT NOTE: Some of these dates are not yet confirmed. Before scheduling your travel, be sure to confirm the festival date with the ISKCON temple in the city where the festival is to be held. Or email Festival of India: madhuhadasa@gmail.com.



*New York
Rathayatra Festival
2010*